TO-MORROW NEVER COMES

R. L. DUFFUS

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A Novel

BY

R. L. DUFFUS

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TO

A LADY WHO ONCE SAID
THAT WHEN SHE WAS QUEEN
ALL STORIES SHOULD HAVE HAPPY ENDINGS

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I

RAFAEL slid through a green door in a white wall into a street of blinding light and purple shadow. As he did so he distinctly heard Señor Sebastian snoring in the front room in which that well-known advocate pursued what was technically known as the legal profession. Rafael moved with caution, for he was not anxious to wake Señor Sebastian, and yet with an air of independence, too. It was not much, perhaps, to be an office employee of one of the least scrupulous members of Santa Eulalia's completely corrupt bar, but Rafael had reasons for his pride. In the first place he was too young, at twenty-three, to know that no member of the human race, at least in Santa Eulalia, had any good reason for being proud of himself. In the second place he happened to be the son of the canon of the cathedral, though the canon, for certain professional motives, chose to make as little as possible of the relationship. In the third place Vitoria loved him.

He padded softly, yet with a kind of lilt, over gray-greenish cobblestones, and between close-sprawling adobe houses, overhung with red-tiled roofs and blinking through grated windows and smiling or leering with blue, green, orange, and vermilion doors. Whatever could be said of the

people of Santa Eulalia — and first and last there was much to be said, for and against — it could not be denied that they and their surroundings were vividly colorful. There was no end to the humanness of their houses, even though the architectural scheme was much the same in every case. The houses had taken the shape of the people who lived in them, who, so to speak, wore them, just as clothes do. There were gay houses and sinister houses, houses whose windows were like a pair of priestly eyes peering out of a confessional, and houses that would snatch the soul out of you, if you had one, with their joyous wickedness.

It was the hour, or rather hours of the siesta. Santa Eulalia slept. Even the dogs slept. The very fleas, it was said, respected the siesta. The baker's shops, smelling of fresh bread, were closed, and so, too, were the cafés and cantinas, the shops where beady-eyed Orientals hung out bright silks to catch the eyes of rich people, the provision stores, and the quincallerias where the Eulalians bought their rifles, revolvers, and machetes. But one shop, to which Rafael presently came, still had an open door. This was the establishment of Domingo, a veteran of four revolutions and three foreign wars, who now sat in a narrow hole in the wall and spat and discussed philosophy with all who would listen, and incidentally earned a modest living by making shoes. No one had ever seen Domingo sleep and it was thought he had forgotten how. He merely sat very still in his door, in the sun, grizzled, sun-wrinkled, with a skin

as tough as one of his own boots, and squinted up at Rafael with cynical old eyes. People believed that Domingo's cynicism was due to his tragic experiences as a soldier. Another cause was that he had been unfortunate enough to set up as a shoemaker in a country in which few persons wore shoes. He had done a rushing business for a few weeks some years before when an American medical commission had visited Santa Eulalia and had pointed out that the wearing of shoes was in some strange way a cure for the indolence with which the native population was, according to one's point of view, afflicted or blessed. The then incumbent president of the republic had at once issued a decree that shoes be worn by every one on and after a given date. But after his enraged constituents had cut him into quite small pieces and elected a new president, the shoe business had declined. So for this if for no other reason Domingo could not help looking disillusioned.

'What deviltry are you up to now, my little one?' he asked.

Rafael did not like to be spoken to in this patronizing fashion. 'Some day,' he retorted haughtily, 'I'll tell you. I'm in a hurry now.'

'I was, too, at your age,' said the shoemaker. 'Keep on hurrying and you'll find yourself as old as I before you know it. But be on your way. They won't wait as they did in my time. Women have strange new notions these days.'

'I thought you liked new notions.' Rafael had

him there, for to hear Domingo talk one would have thought there was nothing good in any accustomed thing.

'That I do. But not in women. The good God — as your father the canon calls Him — never meant women to think. That's why He didn't give them what I should call minds. But we men, that's what we're for — to enjoy the women, to fight, and then to think. When we can no longer fight or take our pick of any but the ugliest women, we can still think. It's a poor enough amusement, at that. But the women never come to it.'

Rafael was moving off.

'Luck go with you, my green melon!' cried the shoemaker.

Rafael turned. 'You can keep your luck for yourself,' he flung back arrogantly. 'I'll not be needing it.'

The old man sighed. 'To be twenty-three now, that would be luck.' He narrowed his eyes reminiscently. 'When I was twenty-three, O lump of unbaked dough, I was carrying a rifle at the taking of Ciudad Diego. Ah, what women! And all ours — all ours! A vile thing it is to be young, and yet I would be young and vile if I could.'

Rafael was out of earshot. He swung along, in a kind of singing mist of sunlight, not looking closely at anything nor experiencing any sensation except that of being alive. A few extraordinarily energetic Eulalians were beginning to appear sleepily in doorways and wander into the streets, stopping now and

then to lean against the walls and light new cigarettes. The walls and doorways of Santa Eulalia were grooved at about the height of a lounging man's shoulder. But the only sign of anything that could properly be called life was the spectacle of Mr. Fergueson, the British consul, and Mr. Riley, the American consul, sitting together, engaged in an almost friendly conversation, at one of the little tables in front of the Café de la Natividad. Mr. Fergueson, Mr. Riley, and a Mr. Harris from New York City, who was supposed to represent certain fabulously important financial interests, were the only members of the Nordic race who spent all their time in Santa Eulalia. Sailors, engineers, tourists, an occasional journalist, and once in a while a delegation of American marines, made up the rest of the small floating population.

Rafael came out into the square in front of the cathedral and paused, inclining his head a trifle. This was not done in reverence, but because the bright rain of light beat too hard upon his eyes. Yet the look which he turned upon the gray old building, with its twin square towers, its curiously carved entrance-way, its broad steps, where the beggar-women sat and demanded money for the love of God, had some affection in it. The cathedral sheltered his father the canon, and so had come to stand for a kind of gentility in Rafael which other children of indiscretion lacked. People did not think it altogether fitting that canons should have sons, or at least that it should be known that they had sons,

and yet it was a distinction to be a canon's son. On holy days, of which there were luckily a great many, he liked to slide in with the crowd through the great doors, with their tracery of hammered iron brought long ago from Toledo, and within, at the far altar, through a cloud of music and incense, discern the clustered servants of God, all glowing in their robes, and his father among them, almost as gorgeous as a bishop. He would have liked to be one of them if only at the same time he could have swaggered in his fine clothes before the women and made love to them without subterfuge. But one could not have everything.

He had been a long time in finding out why his father never spoke to him in public, nor even gave him a flicker of recognition, but now, even at an ingenuous twenty-three, he understood well enough. His father had mentioned the subject, vaguely, in some of their rare nocturnal interviews. A bridegroom of the Church was not a free man. And yet he was, perhaps, or had been, a man. Rafael had no memory of his mother. She had been an alien, no one seemed to know of what race, living in the foreign quarter, near the docks where ships nosed in with curious cargoes and the greasy tides came and went. How she and the canon — no canon then, however, but a simple chaplain — had happened to be looking into each other's eyes at a too-auspicious moment no one knew. But so it had been. Rafael had come into the world, and his mother, the golden-haired, the celestial-orbed, had gone away

with the captain of a French merchant ship. Suppose now, the canon-to-be had loved Rafael's mother as Rafael, at this precise moment, loved Vitoria, the daughter of Diego Soberanes. That would explain Rafael's being in the land of the living. But did his father never think of her, even during the solemn enchantment of the mass? Rafael had loved madly, he could not remember how many times, and each time had seemed the maddest and the most lasting, but he loved Vitoria twelve times as much as he had loved any other woman — enough, indeed, he was now sure, never to be able to forget her all the days of his life. If such also had been his father's plight, much would be understandable. The other priests, certainly, took their women more lightly. Some even had no women at all — at least, so ran the popular gossip.

There were mysteries and mysteries. Rafael pondered over them when he had nothing better to do, but he did not brood over them. Here he was — how good God was! — alive, with the warm sun in his face. Here went the yellow hair and blue eyes of that strange lost woman, his mother, on a new adventure.

He passed the old presidio, where, in these piping days of peace, no watch was kept and no doors locked, and came out upon the glowing plain, with the dusty white road roaming over it. Westward and northward were saw-toothed mountains, and through the teeth of the saw crept mist. Over there was the ocean, the wild ocean without any end to it

until you got to China, not like the sluggish flood that rambled in and out of his native land-locked harbor. He plodded on. The plain arched its back and he could almost hear it purring as the road slid tickling over it. It was the dry season. It might not rain for months.

Far away was a cloud of dust, out of which there issued a queer explosive noise. It drew swiftly nearer, and was a rust-colored automobile, one of the battered group belonging to the Eulalian Republic. They had been bought at second or third hand by a former secretary of the treasury, now deceased. He had charged the government first-hand prices and pocketed the difference, but it was for quite another reason than this that he was eventually assassinated.

The uproar was terrific as the car approached, for the government automobiles, by a special decree of the Eulalian Congress, were permitted to drive without mufflers. The chauffeur, a red-faced young man in what had once been a neat white military uniform, gesticulated wildly as he passed, but did not stop. Rafael knew him slightly, but certainly not well enough to account for so earnest a greeting. However, it did not matter. Nothing, except one thing, mattered much.

He kept on his way, followed the road up little russet hills, where oaks leaned all one way as though fleeing in great strides before an advancing enemy, went past vineyards where green grapes hung on endless rows of vines, up and down restless slopes,

and so came at last very near the foot of the mountains. Mountains by courtesy only, yet in the absence of others very near they did well enough. There had been fighting hereabouts in the old days. It seemed a pity the old days were gone. Life was tamer now, since the governments in this neighborhood had taken to talking things over instead of fighting them out. There had been a meeting at Santa Eulalia, the year before, of presidents, diplomats, and well-meaning important persons with nothing to do, and it had been finally settled that there were to be no more wars. One of the presidents had been shot on the way home, but this was considered a domestic matter of no particular importance.

Rafael turned away from the road at a certain oak, went a little way into a field, and flung himself down to rest and wait — a gray-blue patch on a red-brown hill.

He had waited here before, on just such afternoons, and now, again, the same odd feeling came over him. When he was with other people he was Rafael the canon's son, which was well enough in its way. Here, where no one else was, this young Rafael that was himself seemed to swell like a great bubble in the sunshine and burst into a million sparkling points of light. He was Rafael no more. He was a hill, an oak, a cloud, a wind moving gently through quiet air.

The hillside slipped goldenly into a grove of oaks, wherein were dappled blue shadows, and in those

shadows, he knew, there was a dancing. Something luminous and gay flitted like a bird, and yet was not a bird. This he had never seen, and knew, somehow, that he must not see. Yet it was there. White arms lifted and sank down, white feet moved like lilies in ruffled water. Or was this a picture that he made, of something more delicate than form and color? He did not know, nor greatly care. But surely the mountain was happy this day. Or was it his own happiness, his youth, bathing the whole hill like sunlight?

Vitoria came slowly from among the trees, a lithe, slim girl in a dress the color of rich dry herbage. Her dark hair, parted in the middle of her brown forehead, glowed ruddily the length of its heavy braids; her eyes were gray or blue or even green, according to her mood and the fall of light and shadow; she walked like music beneath a high barred window at twilight. So, that is to say, she seemed at that moment to Rafael, who had loved many women, but this one woman most. There were to be other moments when he suspected that there had never been any such Vitoria. But now she approached very softly and magically, tickled his ear with a bit of straw and laughed. Her laugh, as he heard it, was like a thin stream of water falling into a sun-flecked pool, or a lark's song. They had been in love with each other for almost a whole week. They were still dazed, uncomprehending.

'You're asleep.'

He opened his eyes, not startled at all. That was

the best thing about her, a kind of inevitable quality. There had to be a Vitoria, once you thought of her, just as there had to be a sun and a moon.

'Then,' he said, 'I don't want to wake up.'

They gazed at each other shyly. He, the swaggering man of the world, for so, in his innocence, he held himself to be, was for once abashed. He had not been virginal since he was sixteen, yet here he was, eager and yet afraid. And she — somehow he did not ask that question.

'It wasn't easy this time,' she observed. 'My father and mother have been talking about you.'

Rafael started. 'Did he see us?'

'I don't know. But I'm sure he doesn't know who you are.'

Rafael smiled proudly. 'He shall know, some day.'

She shivered. Her eyes opened very wide, as though they were trying to see not alone what was, but also what was to be. 'Sometimes I'm afraid. I don't think anybody in the world is happy except you and me.'

'What of that?' he demanded. 'That is the way it was meant to be.'

She sat down on the grass beside him, and he kissed her, many times, in a number of places, wildly, being under the impression that nothing of this sort had ever been done before, in the same way, by any two persons that ever lived. When that was over, he took both her hands. He looked at them as though he saw them for the first time. There was a

kind of trembling inside him. The stark outlines of sunlight and shadow on the hillside grew misty. He was gazing at her hands as though he would never see them again and meant to remember them, from that one seeing, forever.

'I had a dream,' she said. 'I had a dream — a terrible dream.'

She quivered. Though one constantly forgot it, she was only twenty-two.

'Tell me,' he insisted.

'I can't.' She was half laughter, half tears. 'It was as though all this wouldn't go on — forever — as though it would end the way all the others have.' She paused. 'Or in a worse way,' she whispered.

'That is foolish!' he cried. 'This is different from the others, for both of us.'

But now she had turned and her face was toward the sleeping valley and the city. A splash of light was the cathedral. The rest was shadow. 'It's something there.' Her words were almost unspoken. 'Something that hates us — something that hates — this!' She swept the whole hillside into the final word, as if trying to draw a protecting circle round the two of them. They were exposed and naked, like creatures in a bubble that a breath of wind might destroy.

But Rafael felt obliged to cry nonsense, and to cover her face and neck and little ears again with kisses.

'Rafael!' — her face lit up with swift resolution — 'would it be very wicked to have one day and one

night our own—one day and night that God Himself can never take away? After that it would not so much matter what happened. I would think of that day and that night.'

'I am sure it would be wicked,' returned Rafael, 'but not too wicked. The sin would be worth the penance. No matter what the price it would be bought at a good market.'

She took his hand without another word and they went across the red-brown field among the hurrying oaks. Their feet were now in the white road, soft and silent with dust.

'Where?' he asked.

She turned toward the mountain. Not far above their heads wandered long streamers of sea fog, slowly dissolving in the warm inland air. 'Over there. It's been a long time since I was there. But there are shells and sand and great white birds. I used to go there, all alone, when I was only a very little girl.'

'I've been there, too,' he interrupted, 'many times.'

'I know,' said Vitoria, 'but not with me, which is the same as not going at all.'

'I think,' he reflected, 'I must go to so many places with you. They will be different.'

The road wound up into a low pass. It was not long before they came into the fog, a fog that flowed quietly between green walls of pine. They met a man riding on a burro, behind two panniers filled with cabbages. He wore a huge sombrero, a dirty

serape was about his shoulders, and his naked feet almost touched the ground. He took his cigarette from his mouth, wished them a lazy good day, and swung about to watch them after they had passed.

'He will tell,' said Rafael.

'Yes.'

'But it does not matter.'

'No, it does not matter.'

The road dipped after a while and they went down steeply into the fog. But now it did not seem gray, like most fogs, but was full of delicate color, of mother-of-pearl.

'You are not afraid any more?' He knew she was not, but he had to ask.

'Are you?' She walked with a maddening lilt, her head a little to one side. She was looking at him out of the corners of her eyes. He watched the swing of thigh and waist and shoulders, and his pulses beat like drums, like drums that called to battle.

'I'm not afraid anywhere,' he said.

'Aren't you afraid of losing me? Aren't you afraid of going back to the week before last when there was no Vitoria?'

'There isn't any such week.'

She compressed her lips firmly. 'I wish you to be afraid — a little. You shall be afraid now, you shall lose me — now!'

He raced after her madly, down a dip of the road, around a dusty corner. He seized her wrists in both hands as she fought like a cat to thrust him away. 'Not for all the little devils in hell!' he cried.

She went soft and tender in his arms. 'You are so strong, so savage. I love you for it.'

A level light shone through the fog and the colors grew more intense.

'It's as though,' said Vitoria, 'some one had broken up a rainbow and stirred it in, like raisins in one of Dolores' puddings. I don't feel sad and I don't feel afraid, not even of you.'

A dull red disk hovered just ahead, and the whisper of waves, which had been audible for some time, grew by degrees into a roar. They were not walking on a road any longer, but in an untrodden hollow between dim hillocks. These drew aside, and they came out upon a beach strewn with driftwood.

He made a fire. He had bread, wine, and cheese, bought at a bodega on the way, and they sat beside this, their hearth, and ate and drank. After that they smoked. She lit his cigarettes, puffed them three times and handed them to him. The waves advanced timidly out of the fog, retreated and advanced again. The west, though obscured, remained ruddy.

'I think,' she said, 'that's a good sign.'

The red disk began to flatten out at the bottom against an unseen horizon. They watched it in silence. It became a bar, a line, it winked out. Now it was the flames of the fire that were red. That was their sun.

Rafael had been listening. 'Over there' — he waved his hand casually in the direction from which

they had come — 'is a little spring. I shall take this empty wine bottle and bring water.' He got up.

She studied his face in the firelight. 'You are lying, my Rafaelito. You heard something.'

'And if I did?'

'Nothing.' She had not changed her position. 'Only don't lie. Not to-night, at least.'

'I didn't lie,' he protested. 'There really is a spring.'

'Yes. And you think perhaps there really is something else.'

'Perhaps I did. Some small animal. I'll be back in two little minutes.'

She watched him with hungry eyes, then began piling more wood on the fire. He went slowly until he had passed out of the narrow circle of light. Then, softly, peering into the shadows, he began to run. After a few moments he could distinguish objects about him, and he saw a man, knife in hand, swing into view where the dim trail had circled an oak. The two halted abruptly.

'I have found you,' said the stranger.

'And who am I?'

'Rafael Gomez. A flea-bitten lawyer's clerk who has not yet learned his place in the world.'

Rafael flamed with fury. He had not wished to be disturbed. 'As to the fleas,' he whispered fiercely, 'who is there in Santa Eulalia, even our president, who has not been at one time or another bitten by fleas. As to not knowing my place in the world, that is because I have not yet had time to earn it.

Moreover, do not forget that I am also the son of the Canon Roderigo.'

'I did not forget, O child of a nameless mother,' retorted the stranger. 'That is why I am here. Otherwise you should have been shot by a file of lousy conscripts against a whitewashed wall. It is because I have respect for the canon's blood, and also because I am a good Christian and know what is due to the dignity of the Church, that you are to be killed in a more honorable way.'

'But why,' asked Rafael, who was honestly puzzled, 'is it necessary that I should be killed at all? Just now it seems very important to me not to be killed. Cannot you kill some one else?'

The other did not answer in words. Instead he sprang, striking out wildly with his dagger. To Rafael the moment was centuries long. He could not move, could not defend himself, could not cry out. Then his anger swept back, full flood, and with it strength and swiftness. He would not be killed, on this night of all nights, to please anybody. He threw himself, thrusting out a foot, and his assailant tripped and fell headlong. The dagger, loosened by a startled hand, rattled against the tree. Rafael was on the fallen man before he could rise, and they rolled over and over, cursing horribly.

The intruder was heavier than Rafael, but not so agile nor so sinewy. Rafael found the throat at last and settled upon it with his two hands, his heart throbbing with savage enjoyment. There was a good deal of kicking, then quiet. Rafael loosened

his hold on the throat, but by way of precaution continued kneeling on the prostrate man's belly. With his free left hand he felt for the fallen knife, found it, transferred it to his right. One blow, a load dragged into the bushes, and this interruption would be over. But though once, at eighteen, he had fought with knives — over a girl, strangely enough, as though any other girl than Vitoria had ever been worth fighting for — he had never killed a man.

'Who are you?' he demanded.

The man was gasping, but he managed to choke out words. 'You shall know.' The face was a white blur, but in the blur Rafael fancied he could detect a faint familiarity. 'You shall know — when it is too late.'

Rafael continued kneeling, but he managed to get out a match and strike it. The face he saw was that of a man in his early thirties, with a black mustache, a man handsome enough in his way, and cruel and accustomed to mastery. Rafael was startled. It was all he could do not to jump and run.

'Ah!' he cried. 'How was I to know?' If it had been the president himself, he could hardly have been more surprised. As it was, he was gazing, in this unaccustomed fashion, upon General Hernandez, chief of staff, secretary of war, and generalissimo of the army of the republic of Santa Eulalia. There he lay, on his back, the defender of the people's liberties, with the apprentice, or at best the journeyman employee of Santa Eulalia's most unscrupulous lawyer, kneeling upon his belly. The

situation was mutually disconcerting. Rafael had previously seen the general only in parades, in a becoming red and blue uniform covered with gold braid. It was said that he was fiercely ambitious and would, if he could, thrust the president aside and make himself the Mussolini of Santa Eulalia. His handicap was a fondness for women which sometimes drew his attention from more important matters. All women found him irresistible, except the few who resented his own belief that he was irresistible. But he had his sterner qualities. He believed in discipline. He believed in subordinating the desires of the few to the interests of the many, even though the latter did not know what their interests were. Consequently he had a habit of having people who displeased him beaten by hired thugs or publicly shot, according to the degree of his displeasure and the nature of the excuse he could bring forward. But Rafael reflected, as he considered these details, that the general could not have him shot so long as he, Rafael, continued to kneel upon the general's belly. He therefore preserved the position which he had assumed.

'Why is it necessary that I should be killed?' he asked again, returning to their interrupted conversation. 'I have not knowingly done anything to offend or injure you. I did not so much as know that you were aware that I was in the world at all. Why did you do me the honor of coming here tonight?'

The general grimaced, partly with pain, partly

with an unattractive kind of mirth. 'The woman you have stolen. The woman who belongs to me.'

Rafael's dagger arm trembled. 'You see, do you not, that I could kill you, bastard and nobody though I am?'

'And be killed,' returned the general calmly. 'I have breath enough to whistle. I have only to do so and — you should see.'

Wild thoughts raced through Rafael's head, and with them, for an instant, a sick despair. Then joy came surging back.

'I will bargain with you,' he began. 'For the moment you are no longer a general, but a man, and I no longer a lawyer's clerk and a bastard, but another man. I will bargain with you. I will exchange this night against your life. If I let you go, you will turn back, you will not stop until you have reached the city again, you will talk to no one about me until to-morrow, you in no way will interrupt or harm us. After to-morrow you may do as you like. Kill me then, if you can. Have me shot. I will die to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow, if it is necessary, but I must live to-night. I must live! Do you understand?'

The general meditated. 'After all,' he said, it is the woman I want. What is one night more or less?'

Again the knife trembled in Rafael's hand. But there was Vitoria. To kill the general now, which would be a pleasant thing to do, was to lose Vitoria at once and forever. To let the general live was to have Vitoria for at least this one night out of all

eternity. His twenty-three callow years ripened within him. He became a man, hard, calculating, bitter.

'Swear it, by our Blessed Lady!'

'I swear it!' In the gloom the general's pious fingers made the sign of the cross. Then Rafael stood aside and the prostrate autocrat got stiffly to his feet. 'Boy,' he resumed, clearing his throat and regaining a more natural tone, 'I could have you killed, even now. But that is not the way with us Spaniards. We are not Americans. We keep our word. So you shall not be killed now. The night is yours. The to-morrows, however, are mine. It is not that I have anything against you. That would be to flatter you too much. But you have been so foolish as to step in my path. I therefore thrust you aside. You will see, when your blood is cooler — as it will be soon — how proper it is that this should be the case. Your first duty, you must always remember, is to your government and to your country, of which I have the honor to be a humble representative. Private citizens should not lay claim to women who are wanted by members of the administration. It is — it is communistic. You shall be killed therefore, as pleasantly as I can arrange it, and your father will doubtless see that you have a beautiful funeral and as many masses as your soul has need of. You are fortunate. If I were you I should make good use of my night.'

'I will, never fear, my general,' returned Rafael.

The general went quietly away, disappearing in

two strides into the dark. Then, finding the spring, Rafael refilled the empty wine bottle and returned to Vitoria. He was neither dismayed nor anxious. Instead he was filled with pride — the pride of the male whose woman is vainly desired by other men. General Hernandez was as loathsome as a toad in his eyes, yet he gloried in the fact that this man, who could have his choice among the women of the republic, had coveted Vitoria. He felt himself raised to dizzy heights — he the lawyer's clerk, the bastard. He forgot his impending doom.

'I had a little trouble finding it,' he said to Vitoria.

She was standing, both hands behind her, big-eyed, and even in that circle of glowing life, pale. 'I heard, Rafael.' She waited. 'Tell me.'

For answer he took the general's dagger from his own belt and gave it to her. Then he saw that she had been holding in her right hand a little silver-handled sliver of metal.

'Rafael!' A startled look flashed into her eyes as they met his questioning glance.

He went close to her. 'It was General Hernandez. He called you "The woman you have stolen, the woman who belongs to me."'

'It is not true.' She did not waver.

'Then why?' His gaze was both stern and pitiful.

'It was at the president's ball, you will remember, two weeks ago, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of his marriage to his lady, the señora. The señora's family, people said, had insisted upon it. And I went because my father had helped the president when he was trying to be elected.'

'The last revolution,' said Rafael.

'Yes, the last revolution. And General Hernandez saw me and at once came across the floor to speak to my father. And we danced together, and the general walked out into the garden with me and said I must try to keep out of the president's sight.'

'Why did he say that?'

'He said I was so beautiful the president would fall in love with me, and that this would be a very great honor, but that it would not be proper for it to happen at a ball in celebration of the tenth anniversary of his marriage to his lady, the señora. Then he kissed me.'

'Filth!' cried Rafael. 'And I could have killed him.'

'In a fatherly way, he explained,' Vitoria continued, with a flash of the devil in her eyes. 'Then he kissed me again, and said that was in a brotherly way. And the third time ——'

'The third time!' Rafael swung sharply about. He might, by running desperately along hidden paths, overtake the general and kill him with his naked hands.

'There wasn't any third time. I didn't like his kisses very well. I ran away. I slapped him. He couldn't run after me because the ballroom was full of people.'

'And did you see him again?'

'He had to go away the next day, to the maneuvers. Then you came and I forgot about him. You see, that was fourteen — and now it's almost fifteen

— days ago. How could I remember? Then he sent word he would like to see me. I — I forgot to answer it.' She laughed enchantingly.

Rafael glowered, but rather at the thought of General Hernandez than at Vitoria. 'He didn't forget so easily.' He gazed at her another long moment. 'But I know that what you say is true. I know you could not lie to me, even if you wanted me to.'

'I shall never want to.'

'There will not be much time.' He smiled tenderly. 'You see, I am to be killed to-morrow, or perhaps, if I have very good luck, not until the day after to-morrow.'

She caught at him fiercely. 'No! No! I will not let you be.'

'It does not matter,' returned Rafael, not believing in death at the moment. 'I have bought to-night for all the to-morrows. Perhaps there will not be any to-morrows.'

'Oh why, why,' she cried, 'must there be talk of killing? Does love always mean killing? Must there be blood everywhere, even here, even for us?'

Rafael laughed, strong in his youth. 'Is not this night enough?' He took her willing captive.

After a while the wind blew the fog away, and there were stars and the dark water lay visible, dusted with faint reflections. In each other's arms they lay, a little world in space. There was no Santa Eulalia, no Sebastian, no Domingo, no General Hernandez, no other world at all than this, that for the night was theirs.

II

THE years had not been kind to Señora Sebastian. Her figure, her voice, her teeth, her disposition, all had deteriorated. Even in her extreme and tender youth she had hardly been a woman one would have gone far out of his way to serenade. Nevertheless she was now being serenaded. After the singing, which was accompanied by a certain amount of knocking, beating, kicking, and shouting, had been going on for some time, she pushed open the shutters of her low upper room, under the tiled eaves, and inspected the cause of the tumult. The street was a river of shadows, with glimmering banks where the starlight fell upon low roofs and down narrow alleyways. Far off the dawn was on the march.

'What do you mean by howling down there like a cat at this hour of night?' she demanded. She spoke in a tone which hinted at something more than a mere desire for information.

There was a sound of other shutters opening up and down the street. Even in Santa Eulalia there were those who disapproved of other people's joy. A shrill voice stabbed the darkness a window or two to Señora Sebastian's right. 'I know a way to make such caballeros move along. Let him come and sing here, now, for a second, and he'll see.'

'Feel, you mean!' broke in some one else. 'It's too dark to see.' The reference was understood. Santa

Eulalia had retained, far into the twentieth century, certain humorously primitive habits.

'Call the guardia civil,' came another suggestion. 'Let him sing to them.'

Señora Sebastian, strangely enough, was not grateful for these suggestions. 'Close your mouths there!' she cried, with something less than Castilian politeness. 'You'll find plenty to do inside, I've no doubt. I'll attend to my own visitors.'

'Best not let Señor Sebastian know, then!' There was a general laugh to this sally.

'O most beautiful of women,' said the voice in the street, which had stopped singing. 'Aren't you going to let me in? It's Rafael, your honest Rafael. Where else should I knock if not here, and what else should I do but knock if the door's locked and I want to come in? And if I am obliged to make a noise, why should I not also entertain you with music?'

'I know nothing about any honest Rafael,' retorted the señora tartly. 'My husband once had a clerk by that name, but he wasn't honest. He stole off when he should have been at work. If you are Rafael, you may go dig or enlist in the army. We have no further use for you.'

'It does not so much matter,' Rafael replied. 'I am to be killed to-morrow, and therefore I could not waste time copying lies for your husband. Let him go to the carcel and find another clerk. But before I leave you forever, I shall sing to you again.'

'You're drunk, you brawler, you wineshop filth, you mestizo.' Señora Sebastian, the daughter of the

keeper of a cattlemen's fonda, often had lapses in which she forgot the refinements proper to the wife of a prominent member of the Santa Eulalian bar. On such occasions her language had the vigor of the open spaces in which her robust youth had been passed.

Rafael responded gayly. 'Drunk? Yes. But on no wine you've ever tasted, O sister of lady dogs. Drunk on starlight. Drunk on love.'

There was a silence. Señora Sebastian's silhouette had disappeared from the window. Rafael waited, but not impatiently. This was no hour for sleep. It was an hour, a night, all made of music. If he slept he would miss a strain or two, a star or two, forget for precious moments the sweetness of embraces whose fragrance still lingered. He did not want ever to sleep again. He could sing for a week, dance for a month, sing and dance all the rest of his life — which, after all, might not be long.

But now it was Sebastian's voice at the window. 'Rafael,' it said sternly, 'you are dismissed. I rid myself of you. It is not alone that you left me without warning on a busy day, but now you return to insult us. Knock at my door no more or I'll have you laid by the heels. By the mother of God I swear it. Go your ways and may the Devil look after his own.'

'Let it be as you say,' responded Rafael cheerfully. 'We part friends, then.'

'We part.' Sebastian's voice was not friendly.

'Adios, then, home of my youth. Adios, O kennel

of the living dead. I will go out into this broad world, that looks so dark to you and is so bright to me.'

He went quickly, keeping to the very center of the street. From certain sounds at the window of Señor and Señora Sebastian, he judged he had withdrawn none too soon.

He grew more sober as he went. Why did this good God that his father the canon served think it necessary to make creatures like Señor and Señora Sebastian when there was no doubt He could, if He would, people the world with Vitorias? But if God had done that, he, Rafael, could not have spared a single one, could not have endured that any other man should have had a word or a smile from one.

He came into the plaza and gazed at the black bulk of the cathedral, with its square towers, and at the adjacent house where his father lived. He had some notion of knocking upon his father's door and asking whether it were a mortal sin to love, and to obey the natural impulses of loving, the loveliest thing God ever made. What were priests and canons for if not to answer such questions? And again he suspected that this father knew what this madness was — or had known. Then he was swiftly ashamed of this drunken humor, ministered to as it had been by potions recklessly swallowed all the way home at every fonda and wine shop he had found open. Better to have lain under a bush and seen the dawn come marching over the naked hills like an army with banners. A roysterer howling in the streets. Was that Vitoria's lover? He felt a fierce impulse to

return to her, where perhaps she now lay sleeping in her own bed at home, fall at her feet, implore her pardon. But instead he turned wearily back toward the house of Domingo the shoemaker, the one house in Santa Eulalia where he was sure of a welcome that would ask no questions, sank down in the deeply recessed doorway, and fell instantly asleep.

Domingo, opening the door shortly after sunrise, was at first moved to kick the figure he found upon the sill. On second thought he stooped and took it by the shoulder.

'Why abroad so early, Rafael?' he asked.

Rafael sat up reluctantly. 'Not early,' he protested. 'Late.'

'What will Señor Sebastian say?'

'He will say nothing.' Rafael laughed like a released schoolboy. 'I no longer have a home, unless it is here. I have parted with Señor Sebastian and he with me. In other words, we have separated. Or, if you still do not understand, O my Domingo, we have bade each other an eternal, an everlasting farewell.'

Domingo whistled. 'Poor lad!' he murmured. 'Then you must be either a shoemaker or a soldier, for those are the only trades I know. And it would be a pity for a young man of your education and parentage to follow either the one or the other. However, come inside and we'll have breakfast.'

He led Rafael into the little shop, which smelled vilely of leather after being shut close all night, and

into a little room at the rear, which for several reasons was worse.

'Snug enough!' he suggested, looking about at the tumbled bed, the rickety chair, the heavy table of some smooth black wood, and the iron pot that stewed over a fire in a cheap sheet-iron American stove in a corner. 'I've slept under the grand stars, as the French say, half my life. Now I like a little stinking corner of my own — no winds, no sky, nobody creeping up in the dark with a knife between his teeth. But, for all of that, I live plainly and as befits a soldier. For example, my breakfast is also my dinner and my supper — all in one pot, if you don't count a bit of bread and a glass of wine, or even of aguardiente now and then. I take out a little, I put in a little, and it goes on like that. Yesterday it was a mutton bone, to-morrow, if I have good luck, a piece of beef, day after to-morrow, if the luck is still good but not so good as before, a slice of horse. Well, an old soldier says nothing and is thankful. I have lived a week on a handful of corn. I have gone three days without tobacco. I have suffered, my Rafaelito.'

Rafael sat down on the bed, his chin in his hands, looking into the fire.

'It'll be the wars for you, I'm thinking,' said the shoemaker. He stirred the fire and got some bread from a shelf.

'What wars?' asked Rafael. 'There are no wars any more. It has all been arranged.'

The shoemaker chuckled. 'Oh, yes, there are —

or soon will be. You've noticed the common run here in Santa Eulalia haven't been too well pleased of late. They've been complaining about their taxes and the price of bread, wine and coffee has been too high. The president has been building an addition to the palace. He borrows the men to do the work from the calabozo. Their wages cost him nothing. The result is that all the best carpenters and masons have been arrested. Were I a carpenter or a mason I should now be in jail. He also takes other people's women, which makes him a few enemies, but very earnest ones.'

'Ah!' murmured Rafael.

'That does not matter so much if one is sensible. But the worst fault people have to find with him is that he is always the same. To be governed at all is bad enough, but to be governed by the same man for one, two, three years — that is more than any one ought to be asked to endure. Always the same face, always the same proclamations, always the same way of stealing money. It is like having only one woman.'

'That would not be so bad, if it were the one woman.'

The shoemaker smiled indulgently. 'You think so at the moment. That passes. But there is something more. We are lazy here, we live very quietly, like Christians. We work a little, we drink a little, we play cards a little, if we are not too old we dance a little, we sing a little, we sleep a little, we make love in all the possible ways and places and at all the

possible times. But we grow tired of all this. We must once in a while break something, set fire to something, spill some blood. There's nothing like a cut throat now and then to make life interesting — for those whose throats do not feel the knife. And so there will be wars, my dear Rafael, at least in Santa Eulalia.'

Domingo rolled a cigarette and puffed at it contentedly for some moments. 'There are also,' he resumed, 'other reasons — three other reasons, Mr. Fergueson, Mr. Riley, and Mr. Harris.'

'They do not fight much,' Rafael objected. 'At least not in any way that we would call fighting in Santa Eulalia. It is true that Mr. Riley hit Mr. Fergueson with a bottle at the fête of San Patricio, and they are always talking in very loud voices. But that is all.'

'It is not,' Domingo explained, 'that they believe in fighting. The trouble is that they believe in working. Mr. Harris goes about the country looking for something. Maybe it is oil, maybe it is turpentine, maybe it is land where bananas or rubber or coffee would grow. Mr. Fergueson watches him. If Mr. Harris finds what he is looking for, it will not be Mr. Harris and Mr. Fergueson who will stick knives in each other's guts, but there will be blood-letting just the same. These English and Americans, my innocent Rafaelito, do not believe in fighting, but they will fight in order to make other people work. They are very unhappy because the people of Santa Eulalia will not work. They have money. There are

rifles and machetes for hire. In short, there will be a war — many wars. Our president, being in his way a clever man, knows that. He hopes, too, that we shall not want to cut him into little pieces, as we did the last president, if he can arrange a war for us with some other country. And the president of the other country will be of the same opinions. These presidents, my guileless one, understand one another. Yet they are like other men. When they are once dead, they have to be buried in a hurry, on account of the sun, just like any poor devil of a mestizo. And so what does yesterday's news mean, then?'

'I have heard no news,' Rafael confessed.

'Where were you? In the moon?'

Rafael reflected. 'Yes, in the moon.'

'Well, then. Two peddlers from our city went east to Nueva Tolosa. Now our president has made treaties enough with the Tolosanos to fill this room. He has sworn enough oaths of friendship with the president of the Republic of Nueva Tolosa to fill the great record book at the ayuntamiento. They have gone in procession together and kissed each other on the cheek, like schoolgirls, and sworn, with tears in their eyes, to keep the peace. They have got drunk together in the private rooms in the palace. Our president has offered the president of Nueva Tolosa the courtesies of some of the prettiest girls in Santa Eulalia and the president of Nueva Tolosa has replied in kind. It has been like the Christians of the old days, like Saint Francis, who divided his cloak in two and gave half of it to the beggar. The good

God, if He could have seen, would have blessed them. But the Devil, who's a merry fellow, for all the priests say, would have laughed and taken another drink and waited his time.

'Well, there's an end of that. These merchants of ours go to a poor fonda near Nueva Tolosa City, and as they are not yet rich, but only hope to be, it is a filthy place. There are vaqueros there and these vaqueros are drunk and full of foulness. Our fellows are quiet and well-behaved. But all at once one of the Tolosanos says our president is a pig. Well, that is quite true. He looks like a pig, he acts like a pig. But it is not for the Tolosanos to say so. So up jumps one of our men, maybe with his hand on his bit of steel, there's a fight, and both of our men get themselves killed. Ordinarily nothing would be said, about that. There are always plenty of merchants, and they are all liars and scoundrels, yes, though I am by way of being one myself. But our president is thinking, as I have been telling you, that there are men in this town who are ripe for throat-cutting, and if there is to be throat-cutting, which, as God is his witness — and God doesn't deny it! — he'd as soon it would be Tolosano throats. Especially he doesn't want it to be his own throat. So there's to be a war.'

'But has he said so?' asked Rafael.

'Ah,' returned Domingo, rolling a new cigarette, 'you must remember that this is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The president cannot say there is to be a war without

first consulting the people's representatives.' He stirred up the contents of his pot of stew and handed Rafael a bowl with a spoon in it. 'He has called a meeting of Congress. He has acted very nobly, in the best Eulalian tradition. He has let the Opposition party out of prison, even several who were to have been shot soon, in order that they may vote for the war. Señor Harris has been to see him, several times. Señor Harris has been looking at some land near the frontier.'

Rafael was eating with a marvelous appetite, and at the same time thinking of Vitoria. The eyes of Vitoria. The hands of Vitoria. The warmth and softness of Vitoria. The ripple of her dark bronzed hair. The fragrance of it. There was something else, too, now that he came to think of it — something not quite so pleasant.

'I am to be killed to-day or to-morrow,' he observed. 'So I shall not be able to go to the war.'

'I see,' replied Domingo tranquilly. ' A woman. That is often the case. And who is to kill you?'

Rafael mentioned the name, and added hastily, as Domingo's lower jaw sagged in consternation, 'But it does not matter. It is a bargain I made.'

Domingo shook his head slowly. 'You are mistaken,' he declared. 'It does matter. As an old soldier let me tell you that dying is a very nasty way of going out of this world. How did this happen?'

Rafael told him.

'There are so many women in the world,' was Domingo's comment. 'It is a pity you did not pick

some other. As it is he'll have the moonlight let into your belly, and that'll be the end of you.'

'It could not have been another.' Rafael's face was wrathy. 'Let him pick another.'

'But what good is a woman when there are six feet of earth between you and her?'

'There was nothing between us last night!' cried Rafael. 'Let him change that if he can.'

Domingo shook his head hopelessly. 'Nothing can make you understand. You talk as though you were a general and he the bastard and unacknowledged son of a canon of the cathedral. Why should one be a general if he is not to have his pick of the women? Moreover, why worship one woman as though she were the Blessed Virgin herself? Are not all women, in the ways that count most in women, alike? In my day, it is true, some were much better than others, but all, if they were not too old or too ugly, were good. We took what we could get and burned candles to the saints for their generosity.'

'I do not know about your day,' Rafael insisted stubbornly. 'But now, for me, there is but one woman.'

'And one fool the more! As if there are not already more than enough! And you wish to marry her, perhaps — though you have not said so — and breed a race of little fools. For consider, if there be but one woman in the world and she does not love you, or loves you a little, but loves some other man better, or if she is deceiving you, do you see, for the

sake of her pride or for the few pesos you have in your clothes, or if she grows old, or if she dies — and women do all these things — why, then, where are you? But your wise man, when he has lost one woman, first curses a little and walks the streets a little by night, and maybe picks a quarrel here and there, for there is nothing like a fight to make one forget the love of woman. Then he begins to look about him again, and to listen for the whisk of skirts. He smells a perfume, he catches an eye, a rose falls at his feet — and there he is. The comedy begins again.'

'Her name,' said Rafael, 'is Vitoria.'

'A pretty name,' assented the shoemaker. 'But there are other pretty names. Teresa, Gabriela, Monica, Roseta — are they not all pretty names? I have loved them all, I have been willing to die for them all, I have all but forgotten them all. You see, then, you are mad. If you were not mad, you would listen to my arguments, which, let me tell you, I have learned at some cost.'

Rafael drew a long breath. 'If I am mad I could go to mass and fall down on my two knees and thank the Blessed Virgin for my madness.'

'It seems so.' Domingo's fierce old eyes shone as with the momentary flaring-up of a long-dead fire, and some of his mocking insolence left him. 'I have known a few such madmen in my time. The world has little use for them, Rafaelito — perhaps because they make it envious and ashamed. When it can it kills them. There are so many ways of killing a man.

They are stabbed in street scuffles, they are throttled in dark corners, they are betrayed, they hang themselves, they drown themselves, they starve. That is the end of most of them, my poor empty-headed Rafaelito.' They had finished their meal and Domingo put the lid back on the pot and set the spoons and bowls back on the shelf. 'I do not mean to give you as much hope as would butter this crumb,' he said. 'The chances are you are as good as dead. This time next week your father will be having masses said for the repose of your soul. That is the advantage of being connected with the Church. But if you live—ah, then you shall be one of the masters of the earth. To be such a fool is to outlive a million of these crawling maggots that dodge shadows and sleep by firesides and call themselves men. Mind you, I do not advise it. But in your case there is nothing else to do.'

'I shall dream a little before I feel the steel.' Rafael's face was glowing. And perhaps — after.'

'It is a fine sport, dreaming.' Domingo sighed. 'But I was never fit for it. However, that is neither here nor there. The point is that our good secretary of war, chief of staff, and generalisimo of the army — may his soul roast in hell for a million years — will presently be asking you to pay your share of the bargain. He will not come himself, for he will be busy serving his country and protecting Santa Eulalia from the brutal attack which is about to be made upon her honor, but he will find time to send some one else.' Domingo cast a critical eye about

the room, as though considering the possibilities of defense. Then he reached under the bed and pulled out a rifle with an attached bayonet. 'Look you, I still know my manual of arms. The weapon itself can no longer be fired and the bayonet is rusty, but it has been that before. I take my stand at the door — it is our first line of defense and also our last. Your man rushes me. He will not use his revolver because he will not care to attract attention. He dies. You are at the left of the door — you are my right wing in reserve. The second man rushes me. You catch him with your dagger in the back. The throat is good, too, if you can get at it — they die quickly and quietly. So then there will be two of them dead and two of us.' He rubbed his chin reflectively. 'That is an excellent plan of battle. But it has one fault. We shall miss our suppers. Or we shall have supper in heaven, which will doubtless be very pleasant, but which I, for all the padres say, have little stomach to do.'

Rafael got to his feet. 'Amigo viejo,' he said, 'why should you be killed? It is I who made the bargain. I shall go now. I shall go toward the house of Vitoria Soberanes. I may see the window of her sleeping-room. I may even, if the saints are good to me, see Vitoria herself again before I die. They will kill me there or on the way. And I shall kill one of them, so that they shall have something to remember me by. That will be better.'

For answer Domingo shut and locked the door leading from the rear room into the shop.

'Did any one see you enter?' he asked.

'I remember no one.'

'Then you shall stay here and perhaps we shall not have to fight our battle after all. They may think you have fled the city.'

Rafael's eyes flashed. 'I will not have them think I am afraid.'

'Better they should think you afraid, and be mistaken, than think you dead, and be right.' Domingo changed his manner suddenly. 'You found her body good?' he demanded.

The tears were in Rafael's eyes now. 'I should be a damned soul, in Paradise, if I were never to know it again.'

'Then it is settled. You shall stay here. You shall not die. You shall have one more night — who knows but many more nights? I shall go to my work and you shall sleep. If you are awakened by the sound of fighting, you shall come out and we shall kill as many of them as we can. Perhaps we can kill more than two.'

Rafael thought again of the warmth and glory of Vitoria. He was no longer drunk, but weary. He wavered, sank back upon the bed, and before Domingo had closed the door was fast asleep.

When he woke, Domingo was again standing in the doorway, and there were sounds of tumult, but not the tumult of fighting. He looked beyond Domingo. A quick rush of figures went by the outer entrance. Men gesticulated, shouted, roared with wild laughter.

Rafael's first thought was that his enemy had paid him the compliment of sending an army to kill him. But he saw that Domingo was smiling.

'Did I not tell you there was to be a war?' cried the shoemaker triumphantly. He waved a hand toward the street. 'There is your war getting forward now. Listen!' Far away there was a great shouting. The passers-by quickened their already rapid pace. Life had suddenly a new interest for them. There was something to run toward.

'They're bringing our two poor fellows back from Nueva Tolosa,' explained Domingo. 'Our president sent a company of cavalry to get them, and their president gave the remains to us, with apologies — oh, with the most polite apologies — for their poor condition. But they'll never peddle any more. They're as full of holes as so many sieves. They'll never roam the roads, nor sleep under a bush on starry nights, nor have their way with the country girls — never again as long as the world stands. Our president, you must understand, is as fine a gentleman as the president of the Republic of Nueva Tolosa. They have sent messages inquiring as to the other's health, and each has invited the other to pay him a visit. They have also cut the telephone and telegraph wires at the frontier, though for that each blames the acts of hot-headed officials on the other side. In addition, the whole controversy, except as it touches on points of honor, is to be submitted to arbitration, as the treaty between Santa Eulalia and Nueva Tolosa provides. But our president thinks it

only fair that virtuous citizens who have come to grief while abroad in the service of their country — and is not a merchant serving his country who sells goods to foreigners for five or six times what they are worth? — should have a public funeral. And so what the Tolosanos left of our fellows is being taken to the ayuntamiento to lie, as they say, in state. That does dead men no good. They are as dead, as far beyond feel of wind and rain, as though they had been tossed into a gutter and left to rot. But it permits the mob, of which they were no more than a lousy tatter while they were yet alive, to satisfy its curiosity as to how dead men look. But to look at a man who has been butchered — that, unless you have been a soldier, gives you a blow in the face. It says, so shall you be, my pretty lad, before long. That makes you angry. Perhaps it is life you hate, that plays this dirty trick on us, but since you cannot beat life over the head, it is pleasant to have men to hate. And there are the Tolosanos. Our mob will file through the hall of the ayuntamiento and come out howling for revenge upon the Tolosanos. They will not ask, is it the Tolosanos' fault that men do not live forever?'

The storm in the street was rising to a respectable crescendo. For a long time the hurrying feet kept going by. Then the moving mass slowed down, shuffled, wavered to and fro, and was finally packed tight in the narrow passageway which led toward the plaza and the avenidas beyond. Domingo, looking over the heads of the crowd with the aid of a bench

dragged near the door, motioned to Rafael to keep back out of sight. But this caution was soon forgotten in the veteran's growing excitement.

'There's a wild man making a speech at the corner. I know him, he's in the president's pay. The guards are pretending they're trying to stop him. They're prodding the crowd with the butts of their rifles and letting themselves be pushed back. Here comes an officer. He's ordering them away. Let the wild men howl for all he cares. It's not the president's game to stop them to-day.' A shout went up. The crowd surged forward. Domingo peered far down the street. 'The procession's going into the ayuntamiento now. I can see the sunlight on the bayonets. There's black on the flags. There goes the president, by the little finger of San Antonio! Everybody knows he's a thief. God, how they love him, though! They're throwing their hats into the air like confetti at the Mardi Gras. Hear them howl!'

The bell of the cathedral began to toll. Bong . . . a long humming interval . . . bong . . . a swarm of giant bees let loose . . . bong . . . a murmur and a movement . . . the crowd was falling on its knees . . . bong . . . bong.

Domingo had knelt with the rest, but upon his bench, so that he still overlooked the crowd. His face wore a curious expression. His mouth, under the mustache, had not lost its customary cynical twist. But his eyes flamed, one might almost have said with joy.

The tolling had stopped, the last stroke humming a long time in suddenly quiet air.

III

With twilight the streets began to empty. 'Even their grief for their dead countrymen,' said Domingo to Rafael, 'though it is as real as any of their emotions, cannot make them forget their stomachs. A man is first a stomach. Then he is a lover. Then he is a fighter. But it is the stomach's tune he marches to. Those who can eat, including ourselves, will now eat. Those who cannot eat will blame the Tolosanos. We shall hear from them later to-night. I would not — not for a million pesos — be a Tolosano baker or jeweler or the keeper of a Tolosano cantina in this town three hours from now.'

He relit the fire in his sheet-iron stove, set his pot over it, and again got out the two bowls, the two spoons and the bread. He also took down a bottle of sour red wine. Rafael ate and drank, this time with an appetite not so good as before.

'You see,' Domingo remarked, 'the day is past and you have not been killed. That, for a soldier, is to live forever.'

'The day is gone by,' returned Rafael somberly, 'and I have not seen Vitoria. I do not know what she is doing, nor even that she has not forgotten me.'

Domingo smiled out of the depths of his wisdom. 'My young calf, still wobbly on your legs in the great pasture of this world, remember this: it is the women who are slowest to forget.'

Rafael did not smile. 'After I have been dead a thousand years, my dust will still remember. And when it goes blowing up and down the world, those who listen shall hear the whisper of Vitoria in the wind.'

He was hardly speaking to Domingo, but Domingo answered. 'Very pretty, my Rafaelito, very pretty. It is too bad you are not to be a lawyer. You would have made the judges cry and they would have let every horse thief you defended go free. I have heard the same thing before, though not so well put. I think, but I cannot quite remember, I may have said the same words myself. Yes, I am sure of it. Her name was — now, what was it? Well, it was not Vitoria in any event. But I liked it well enough at the time, whatever it was. She had black eyes, I am certain. Or perhaps they were brown.'

Rafael was getting proudly to his feet, upon some impulse hidden from all but himself. He did not look at Domingo as he spoke. 'I have skulked long enough. I cannot love Vitoria and be afraid. I cannot be afraid of anything, neither of General Hernandez, nor of God, nor of the Devil, nor of anything in this world, nor of hell itself. If her love leaves me with any fear, then it is better I should die.'

He had seized his hat and flung open the door before Domingo could stop him. The shoemaker reached for his own hat with an air of resignation.

'You are a fool and a calf. You have need of a shepherd, a vaquero. I shall go with you.'

Rafael turned and put both hands on Domingo's shoulders. His voice shook. 'I must go alone. But if I come back, I may have need of you. Keep in your shop and open at three knocks.'

'If you are a calf, as I am sure you are,' returned Domingo, his eyes brimming with unaccustomed tears, 'then I am an old woman. It is time I went to war again and learned that whether it is blood or wine that flows it is no great matter, and that tears are only for babies. I have seen many men die. You are but one more. However, go with God!' He turned abruptly away, and Rafael found himself in the street under a remote starry sky.

He did not notice the passers-by, or rather would not have done so had there been any at that moment. Soon he came to the plaza, bathed in rich darkness, save at the eastern side, where torches flamed before the façade of the ayuntamiento. The light flickered upon the faces and accouterments of a little company of horsemen, who sat their beasts in front of the entrance. Higher up stood riflemen at attention, and there was still a little movement of people up and down the steps, and a low, sinister murmur.

Rafael continued on his way, holding his head high, looking neither to right nor to left nor behind, came upon the glimmering road, followed the road to the familiar oak, and turned aside into the field. There was as yet no moon. The smooth, undulating slopes, ruddy brown by daylight, glowed whitely now, as though by a secret light of their own. And now he stood within an enchanted circle. None

other could enter here, not Domingo, nor the canon nor war nor death nor old age nor sorrow; no one, forever, to the end of time, to the crumpling-up of the skies and the falling of the stars, but Rafael and his Vitoria, and those beings, inaudible, invisible, unnamable, that loved them. For here Rafael had seen her first. Here the dear enchantment had fallen upon them both, instantly, without foreknowledge. He had come upon her by what seemed utter chance. She had risen straight and brave before him.

'I have seen you,' he began stammeringly, 'at the Toro del Fuego, perhaps.' He knew he had not.

'Yes, it must have been there.' She, too, had lied. Thus it began, with a lie, with a beautiful lie.

And now again, though he had sent her no word of his coming, he was aware of her presence.

'I have waited so long for you,' she said.

'It has been long for me, also.'

'It is strange. I knew you would come.'

'It is strange, too. I knew you would be here.'

'I prayed,' she said. 'Here. To the Blessed Virgin. To Santa Vitoria. Then I was no longer in fear for you. I knew you would come to me unharmed.' She shuddered slightly. 'And yet' — she clung to him passionately, her face uplifted wanly to his — 'something terrible happened.'

'You are here and I am here,' protested Rafael. 'So what terrible thing can have happened? We are alive. We have each other. What more can we desire, my Vitoria?'

'To-morrow,' she whispered. 'All the dear to-morrows. They will steal them away from us.'

'Don't you remember what I said?' He clutched her fiercely, as though he might even stay the hand of time, might cling to that moment magically, forever. 'Perhaps there will be no to-morrows.'

She shook her head slowly. Even in the starlight he saw her eyes were closed, as though in pain. 'There will be — for others if not for us. To-day General Hernandez came to my father's house.'

'Ah!' Rafael drew a long, whispering breath. 'If I had only killed him!'

'It was quite early in the morning. He was making a tour of the defenses, so he said. He stopped — to ask for a drink of wine. First he talked with my father and mother, who were honored that so distinguished a public servant should knock at their door. Then he asked for me, and my father sent for me. And the general rose and bowed as though I were a queen.'

'My queen. Never, though I die for it, his!' cried Rafael.

'He called me by my name, and said, "You are more beautiful than ever."'

'Why need you tell me that?' Rafael's fists clenched in helpless wrath.

'I hated him because he had tried to kill you. But you must not think a woman dislikes to be called beautiful, even by a man she hates. Then he said, quickly, "It is sad for a young man to die before his time." And I said, "Your excellency, there are sadder things." And he said, "But, after all, he need not die." My father, who had been saying

nothing all this time, now spoke to me. My mother had gone from the room at my father's order. "His excellency does you an honor," said my father. He did not look at me when he said the words. He looked at the floor and pulled at his mustache, which is not the way in which he is accustomed to speak to me. And the general spoke again. "I do not wish," he said, "so handsome a young man to die — so brave a young man. I bear no grudge against him. One little word will save him." He said this in so low a tone that I was not sure my father heard. "And what is that little word?" I asked. "The word yes," said he. "A word is easy," I answered. "What followed would be easy, too," said his excellency, and he tried to laugh as he said it. "The easiest thing in the world, and the pleasantest. The good God has seen to that."'

Rafael groaned aloud. 'Why did I not go on choking him?' His fingers clenched and unclenched. 'Choking and choking and choking while my hands were at his throat.'

She brushed back the curls, the golden curls of that strange lovely woman, his vanished mother. 'Be calm, Rafaelito mio. It is better as it is. So I said, "I am to buy his life, then." He tried to laugh again, and replied, "I would not put it that way. We are not merchants, but friends. We do each other these little favors. I save an estimable young man from being shot or stabbed — save him, mind you, at the very moment when his country needs strong arms to defend it — and you in your turn

say yes to the question no man can help asking you.'"

Rafael's forehead was damp with agony. 'O God!' he cried. 'Let me feel his blood upon my hands before I die!'

Vitoria resumed. 'And then I thought, that if I said no, and no more, my Rafaelito would surely die this very day. I knew the general had but to go to the window and wave a hand.'

Rafael pushed away her hands that were against his breast.

'And so,' she continued, 'I said to him, "I will not say yes, your excellency. But this I promise, that if one hair of his head is touched, it shall be forever no. I have something that will say no for me." And I showed him the little dagger I carry with me and of which you know. Then General Hernandez smiled a little. "Señorita," he said, "it is possible that you have the advantage of this day's bargaining — for bargaining I now see it is between us. I can make no promises, but I will say to you that I am very busy to-day with matters touching the interests of all loyal Santa Eulalians, and it may be I shall not have your young man shot until to-morrow." He was about to go when another car stopped in the road outside, and we knew at once by the coat of arms that it was the car of his highness the president. The general pulled at his mustaches and looked, I thought, almost afraid. None of us said anything. Then my father flung the door open and the president himself came in, with an officer behind him.

He stopped and looked first at me, then at the general, then at my father. Then he laughed. He laughed until all the fat in his cheeks and in his belly shook. "And so, my general," he said, "this is how you prepare to defend your country. You first make sure that its most beautiful women have not been, shall I say, invaded?" General Hernandez was not pleased. His face got very red, and for a moment I thought he would reach for his revolver. Then he smiled. "Could a soldier ask a better inspiration to bravery than Señorita Soberanes?" he asked. The president was looking at me all this time in a way men have. He had seen me at the ball, I could tell that, and remembered me.'

'In a way men have?' repeated Rafael. 'What way is that?'

Vitoria smiled. For the moment there was something less than sadness in the smile. 'You are so young, Rafaelito,' she said. 'Men look at me in a way that says, "You are beautiful, you are desirable."'

'But, O my Vitoria, do you want other men to desire you?'

'Would you desire me if they did not?'

'Always. Forever.'

'No, my little Rafael.' She smiled out of the depths of infinite years, out of the whole history of womanhood. She was no longer Vitoria; she was all beautiful women that had ever lived, or ever would live. 'No, Rafael, my own. If the general and the president did not desire me, you would not. And

because of that, though you know that I hate them both, yet if I must tell all the truth — and you and I must always tell all the truth, must we not, my precious one? — it was not because they admired me that I hated them.'

Rafael's world was tottering. He had not thought of these things before, though he was to think of them a great deal from this time forward. He began to understand the philosophy of his friend Domingo.

Vitoria resumed. 'Then the president, after looking at me for a long time — at least it seemed a long time, for I like him even less than I like Hernandez — without saying any more, came closer and pinched my arm. It left a little black and blue mark. You could see if it were light.'

Rafael groaned. 'Men are beasts!' he cried.

'And women, too,' said Vitoria. She rubbed the injured arm in a reflective manner. 'I do not mind that. I like beasts — nice beasts like my Rafael.' Then she suddenly grew fierce. 'Pig!' she cried. 'Fat pig! I do hate him, Rafael, I do hate him. He is so fat and you are so slim and beautiful.' Then she began to laugh, her laughter became a sob, and he had to catch her in his arms and comfort her for a while.

'Well?' asked Rafael.

'Then,' Vitoria began again, 'I suppose he must have put his fat hand under my chin and I served him the way I had done the general at the ball. That made the general laugh, in spite of himself, out loud.

His highness whirled around, and now it was he who was angry, not at me, but at the general. "You are too easily amused," he said. "I do not think a general should be amused when his country is in danger." Again no one said anything for a little while. You could hear the men breathing. Then the president smiled again, but it was a smile that made me feel cold, right here, in the pit of my stomach. "If you are so much amused by Señorita Soberanes' company," he said, "it might be better, my general, if you did not see her any more during the present crisis. However, it is clear to me that, as the daughter of so old and so loyal a supporter of the administration as Señor Soberanes, as well as for her own charms and virtues, she is entitled to special protection. As commander-in-chief of the army and navy I shall therefore take her under my personal care. And now, my general, I think you may say farewell to the lady and her father and proceed on your tour of inspection." The general was not looking at the president. He was looking at me as though he had something very important to say. But he did not have the chance. The president spoke to him again. "If I were in your place, my dear friend," he said, "I should return to my duties immediately. We should not want to change generals at a moment like this, especially in a manner that would cause pain to your" — this time he laughed quite good-naturedly — "to your widow." The general swore under his breath. Then he brought his heels quickly together, saluted, and went out. A few moments

later we heard his car start and he went off in a cloud of dust. He seemed anxious to be gone.'

Vitoria fell silent.

'And after that?' demanded Rafael.

She started. 'Oh, after that? After that I saw that I must decide at once — I must either tell the president all about you, or a little about you, or nothing about you. I must decide whether the general would still want to kill you, or whether he would not be able to think of killing anybody but the president. I knew he was not thinking about you when he went away. But if I told the president about you, maybe he himself would have you killed, and if he wished there would be nobody to stop him. That is, nobody but General Hernandez.'

'General Hernandez!' cried Rafael in amazement.

'Don't you see? After to-day, for a little while, until they have both forgotten about me, what the president desires the general will oppose, and what the general desires the president will oppose. And that is not all — it is not only me. It is more than that. The general thinks it is time there was a new president.'

'But now,' exclaimed Rafael, 'you are talking like my friend Domingo the shoemaker. 'Why should every one see these things? Why should every one be so much wiser than I?'

She shook her head smilingly. 'It is not because the rest of us are wiser than you, my Rafaelito, it is because we are wickeder. We think, What should we want and what should we do if we were General

Hernandez or the president? Myself, I am very wicked. If I were one of them, I should kill the other. But if I were either of them, I do not think I should kill you, unless I became so angry, because I knew your own Vitoria loved you, that I could not help it.'

There was no spoken communication between them for several minutes. Then she sat up and straightened her hair.

'And after that?' asked Rafaelito again.

Vitoria wrinkled her brows and studied his face as well as she could in the luminous gloom. 'Sometimes, you see, my Rafael, it is necessary to lie a little for the sake of the truth. I shall never lie to you, but in order not to have to lie to you I may have to lie to another men. The president said, "You must not weep, señorita, over a very worthless general, even though I find it necessary to shoot him. Consider, in cards it is always the king who takes the knave — and the queen. Very well, in Santa Eulalia, the president outranks the generalisimo — and he also takes the queen." My father's jaw dropped, though for anything he said he might as well not have been there after the president came in. "You already have a very beautiful queen, señor president," I said to him. "Ah, yes," he answered, "a charming woman. But she would grow tired of me if I spent all my spare time in her presence. Even a very devoted husband must not intrude. I have my friends, she has hers, we are happy. And so" — he cleared his throat — "I should like you

to be my friend as well as my ward. You shall tell me stories. You shall sing to me. I shall tell you about my battles."'

'And after that?' Rafael's voice was threatening. 'Why cannot you tell me everything at once? Why must I suffer?'

'I don't know.' Vitoria's voice was mournful. 'I don't know. I don't want to make you suffer, but there is a little black imp that makes me tell you things in this way. Once, you know, I burned the back of a boy's hand with a cigarette, very badly, and yet I was very fond of him, and afterwards I tied my handkerchief around it and cried. But now I shall tell you everything that is still to be said. All at once I knew what I must do to save you. So I said to the president, "Your highness, I am a very ugly, foolish girl, and I do not know what to say to your courtesy. Yet I am a Santa Eulalian, and in a time like this I, like the others, will be loyal to my president. But I have one small favor to ask." "What is that?" asked the president. Then he added quickly, "It is granted, whatever it is." "I have a friend," I said, "a very deserving young man. He wishes, he also, to be of service to his country. Unfortunately he has won the enmity of a powerful personage — of a personage next in power to yourself. He is also the son of the canon of the cathedral." The president was not now quite so amiable. "Yes," he said, "I understand. I had heard there was such a son. And is he — quite well?" "He would not be if General Hernandez had his way,"

I replied. "The general is prejudiced against him. It is very foolish — but the general is jealous." "Ah, yes," said the president. And I went on, "I have always noticed that it is the men who are not quite sure of themselves who are jealous. It is never the strong and courageous ones. And of course" — this is where I lied, my Rafaelito — "there was no need of it."'

'Your daggers are sharper than the general's,' cried Rafael bitterly.

She tossed her head. 'As it may be. Perhaps I was thinking of my own happiness, not of yours. I wanted you alive, on any terms. At any rate, the president smiled again. "And what is it your young man wants?" he asked. "If he is to die," I answered, "he wishes to die in the service of his country. He does not wish to be murdered by General Hernandez." "Very well," he promised, "that can be arranged." And he turned and said something to his officer. Then he went away.'

'Did he just go away?'

'Perhaps he kissed me.'

'Perhaps? O Vitoria!'

'Well, then, I am sure he did. But afterwards' — she broke suddenly into wild laughter, standing erect and flinging her arms starward — 'afterwards, when he had gone, and when I had got my father out of the house, I went to the kitchen and washed my lips — with the strongest soap Dolores could find.'

'I am alive,' muttered Rafael somberly, 'when I

was sure I should be dead. And now I do not know that I am glad.'

Her face was scornful. 'That is because you think of me, not as a woman who will remain the same no matter what happens, but as an eggshell that any one can break, a garment that any one can soil. It is not because you love me that you talk as you do, it is because you are proud.' She fell swiftly upon her knees before him, as he drooped upon the perfumed turf. 'O my Rafael,' she cried, 'you are warm and living and within the reach of these my arms that do so long for you, and I shall feel your kisses again. O Rafaelito querido, if this be true, what else can matter? I could not live in this world if you were dead; I could not face the coming of morning, nor ever hear laughter, nor see lovers walking. If only you could surely live, I would go bareheaded and barefooted like a penitent. For you I would lie, steal, do murder. Yes, for you I'd sell my body and my soul to the Devil.'

He shrank from her intensity. 'Don't ——!' he began.

'No, Rafaelito!' she cried. 'Don't you see, that is how I love you?' She burst into uncontrollable sobbing. The words poured out convulsively. 'Take me, Rafaelito, my lover, my sweet one! Do not let me go! Hold me against the world!'

The softly moving air carried the pungency of the dried grasses, the perfumes of forgotten flowers. Little friendly murmurs were barely audible among the oaks. In the deeper shadows there was — could

they mistake it? — a dancing, a flitting, a delicate swaying of branches, of leaves, of more than leaves and branches.

'Always?' whispered Vitoria.

'Always!' replied Rafaelito. 'When I am dead there they shall find you in my heart.'

'I wish I were as sure as that — of anything. The world is so strange, so strange. Even in my own heart there is a strangeness I do not understand. Would you believe well of me, no matter what was said — no matter what I did?'

He felt a formless uneasiness. 'Why?'

'Because I should want you to.'

'But what could be said, what could you do that would not be beautiful? I should not wait; I should kill any who spoke ill of you.'

'Poor foolish Rafaelito!' She laughed softly. 'You are so bloodthirsty — for my sake. But I would have you love me in all the ways in which men love women. And I would have you love me more than that. I guard your love like a treasure — see, here, here!' She placed his hands upon her two breasts and upon her heart, and he felt the throb of eager, leaping life. 'Did I not say, for you I'd sell my body? Would you love me, even though I did?'

'You are strange to-night,' said Rafael, a great sickness clutching at his heart.

She laughed. 'We have loved each other eight whole days, is it not true, my Rafaelito? And already has come change. Day before yesterday

it was perfect joy. Oh, I knew why there are flowers and stars, and colors, and music. And yesterday it was a happiness that burned, and I was afraid God might find out and be offended and send punishment. For I do not think He meant any one to be so happy as that. But to-day I have suffered, and there will be other days when I shall suffer, and so I shall buy our love with suffering and it shall last forever. And yet, my Rafaelito, I am a little sad for the dear days that were but last week, when we did not know that God, like his excellency the general, like his highness the president, also had His price.'

'I know,' said Rafael. 'When I was coming to you I thought that would be the end of my desiring, to see you and touch you again and hear your voice. But it is not enough — it is not enough. When I am away from you, I cannot rest until I have seen you again. And when I see you again, I am miserable because we are so soon to part. And to-night you are different, and I do not understand.'

'The days, I think, were years,' murmured Vitoria. 'I have grown very old, O blood of my heart, since first I saw you standing like a dream in the midst of my meadow.'

'And you, like a saint come to bless me.'

'No — not a saint. Never a saint. A warm and wicked woman, my Rafaelito.'

'If you will but be wicked for me alone!'

'Was that,' she mused, 'perhaps the happiest moment we shall ever have, we two?'

'Perhaps. But perhaps, too, we shall carry it with us always. I shall bear it like a shield before me. I shall wear it like a plume.'

'And I,' said Vitoria proudly, 'like a crucifix, next my heart.'

'And will you wait for me to-morrow at this place and at this hour?'

'If God so wills.'

'Promise!'

'If God wills. And go safe, Rafaelito mio, among the bullets and the daggers. You must not die.' She clung to him desperately. 'You must not. You must not.'

'Are there not worse things than dying?' he asked slowly.

She shook her head with a sad smile. 'No. Yes. To live in a world that had no Rafaelito in it, anywhere, ever, that would be worse than dying.' She was silent, a long moment, in the passionate darkness.

'Till to-morrow,' said Rafael.

'Otra . . . vista!' There was a catch, almost like a sob, in her voice.

Rafael stumbled toward the city. The fragrance of her was for a moment still upon his lips. But it would not linger, it would not linger. Dust of the road, dust of the common earth, dust of fighting, dust of dead days that would return no more. How quickly the days died, how like men in battle they died! And returned, returned no more. In a sudden panic he whirled about and ran again past the oak,

up the little slope, to the spot of meadow that was Vitoria's.

'Vitoria!' he cried. 'Vitoria!'

There was no answer. He fell upon his knees, upon his face, and clutched the ground in agony.

IV

ORDINARILY there could not have been found in the whole of Latin America, indeed in the whole world, a more peaceable, good-natured, and easy-going population than that of Santa Eulalia. Like other peoples, it is true, they had their faults. Mr. Fergueson, the British consul, found them lacking somewhat in the respect due to representatives of the superior and more highly civilized races. They made poor and shiftless servants. Mr. Fergueson's boots had not been properly blacked since he came to the country, and he was always having trouble about his laundry. Mr. Harris had other criticisms to make. The Santa Eulalians did not like to work. Worse than that, they did not want anything they did not have — at least they wanted nothing badly enough to cause them to exert themselves to get it.

Mr. Harris was especially pained by this situation, for Mr. Harris was a self-made man. At twelve he had gone to work in a telegraph office in Bangor, Maine; at twenty he had migrated to Boston with two hundred dollars in his pocket and got a job in a bank; at twenty-seven he had transferred his talents to a larger field in New York City; and at thirty-four he was a promising employee of an important New York investment house.

'The trouble with these people,' he would say to

Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson as they sat together in front of the Café de la Natividad, 'is that as soon as they get a few dollars ahead they stop working and spend it.' His pale blue eyes became quite fiery with indignation as he said this.

But even Mr. Harris had to admit that the worst vices of the Santa Eulalians were, as a rule, negative ones. They drank, they sang, they sometimes engaged in noisy private quarrels, and their sex life was not all that Mr. Harris could have wished, and yet even Mr. Harris, walking down La Avenida de la Libertad on a fine cool summer evening, under the palms and past the little tables set out on the sidewalks, amidst a pleasant murmur of voices, especially of those lilting female voices for which Santa Eulalia was justly famous — even Mr. Harris, under these conditions, felt an insidious peace creeping into his soul. Sometimes he had to pull himself together and fight against this peace. He would discover, with a chilly feeling, that for half an hour at a time he had forgotten to think about himself and his career. Occasionally he became convinced that he could save himself only by running away, back to New York — back to Maine, even. He needed, he feared, the stimulation of a winter morning in Bangor, or an hour's wrestle with the traffic on Fifth Avenue. But he had his mission in Santa Eulalia. Paradoxically, in fact, his career depended upon his remaining in this very spot where there were so many influences to threaten it. Mr. Fergueson and Mr. Riley were less intense,

except upon those occasions when they discussed world politics.

But on this particular Tuesday evening which found Rafael returning from his meeting with Vitoria the people of Santa Eulalia were in anything but their customary languorous mood. Mr. Harris had had something to do with this transformation, yet its violence surprised him. It even surprised Mr. Riley, who had been in Santa Eulalia when the people, becoming annoyed at the whimsicalities of their former president, had gone to the palace and made mincemeat of him. It would have surprised Mr. Fergueson had he been capable of surprise. But nothing that the non-English races did really surprised Mr. Fergueson. He found even the Irish and the Welsh a little less than civilized in comparison with his own standards.

The three were sitting rather silently inside, not outside, the Café de la Natividad when Rafael reentered the city. Rafael saw them through the window, Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson looking very red and Mr. Harris very white. He also saw Mr. Riley wave a hand in his, Rafael's, direction, and say something which made Mr. Fergueson laugh and brought a shocked expression to Mr. Harris's thin countenance. But at the moment there was too much going on outside the Café de la Natividad to leave Rafael much interest for what was going on inside.

He had heard the howling some minutes before he came even to the outlying houses. It had an animal

sound that sent chills up and down one's spine. In front of the Presidio a lantern was flashed in his face, and a bayonet stuck against his stomach until he could satisfy the barefooted soldiers on guard that he was a friend and not an invading Tolosano army. This he was able to do because he had had encounters with the guardians of the town's peace on former occasions of — as it seemed at the time — a joyous nature.

The officer with the lantern saluted ironically. 'Pass,' he said. 'You are going home to resume your legal studies, no doubt, my dear Señor Gomez?'

Rafael clapped a hand upon his shoulder. 'No, my dear captain, I am going home to begin the study of war.'

'Go with God, then,' returned the captain. 'There will be war enough.'

Rafael was to see this man's face again under circumstances that he would not forget.

As he now went toward the plaza, he saw the soldiers no more, except for those who still mounted guard in front of the ayuntamiento. People were milling about in a street at the east of the plaza. A figure darted out of the crowd, running desperately. There was furious shouting. 'Stop him!' yelled half a dozen voices.

Rafael drew back instinctively against a house wall. He could not see the fugitive's face, but he heard the sob of his struggle for breath and saw the strained terror of his attitudes.

'Stop him!' The hounds were after him. 'Stop the dirty thief! Stop the bloody murderer!'

Rafael did not move. The foremost of the pursuers were only a few jumps behind their quarry. One of them halted and threw something which glittered for the shadow of a moment in the dim light above a door. The hunted man screamed shrilly. He ran on with frantic energy, gaining on the crowd. Then he gave a great leap and came down struggling and writhing upon his face. The human pack were baying now. Their delight mounted to heaven. They were upon him, laughing, fighting to get at him. Arms, weapons, rose and fell in the mêlée.

It was over in a minute. The crowd moved off, dragging something at the end of a rope. Rafael followed them slowly. He passed the spot where the man had fallen. There was a curious smell. A dog sniffed eagerly. He felt sick and drove the dog away.

'What did he do?' he asked a pale-faced boy of seventeen or eighteen, who lingered as though fascinated by the place.

The youngster stammered in curious embarrassment. 'I don't know,' he answered, his gaze shifting uneasily. 'They said he killed a woman. But some people said he killed and ate babies. I don't believe that. Do you?'

Rafael felt that somehow the boy wanted his answer to be in the affirmative. He shook his head nevertheless. 'Was he a Tolosano?' he inquired.

'Yes, I think he was. He talked in a different way from the rest of us. He had a shop down the street a little — a pastry shop, a pasteleria. I used to

buy little cakes there sometimes, little cakes dipped in rum. They were very good. I didn't know there was anything wrong with him. Sometimes we'd stop to talk. He said he had a wife and two children in Nueva Tolosa and it wouldn't be long now before they'd be coming to live with him. And to-night I went in to buy a cake — a chocolate cake with raisins in it. I could see his mind wasn't easy, for he kept back of the counter, and whenever there was a noise he would jump. I was buying my cake when an old woman came in to get something — I think it was some little buns. Yes, I can remember he started to put them in a bag. Then she laid down her money and he said it was not enough. And she called him a dirty Tolosano thief, and he said something back, but not in a loud voice. But she screamed at him. At first there was no one else there — just the three of us. Then people began stopping outside and pretty soon there was a crowd in the shop. He didn't say any more.'

The boy's voice was shaking. His whole frame seemed to be shaking. But he went on. 'All of a sudden the old woman stopped talking, too, and nobody said anything. Then he gave a jump like a rabbit and dodged through a little door at the back, and everybody went after him. The door opened into another little room and that opened into the patio and he ran through a gate into the street.'

'Did you see all this?' demanded Rafael.

'Yes.' The boy was weeping now. 'Then he ran down the street, and everybody was running after

him and calling him murderer and thief and baby-killer.'

'You, too? Didn't you know better?'

'I did only what the rest did. And then somebody threw a knife and it hit him right between the shoulders. I don't think — I don't think — the one who threw the knife knew it would hit him — like that. He — he screamed. He kept on screaming.'

'I heard him,' said Rafael.

'Then he fell down and kicked and they killed him.'

Rafael's eyes wandered to the boy's empty right hand.

'Where is your knife?' he demanded.

'He killed babies!' shrieked the boy suddenly. 'His hands were all bloody. Like mine, like mine! He deserved to die! He had to die! I'd kill a Tolosano any day. I'd kill you if you were a Tolosano.'

'You've had blood enough for one night,' answered Rafael.

'He was full of blood. I never knew a man had so much blood in him.' The boy sank down into a doorway, leaning against the jamb, his terrible face turned upward. 'It wasn't my fault. I didn't do it. I just went in to buy some cake — a chocolate cake with raisins in it. I'd bought things of him many times.' His head fell upon his arms. He began to cry.

'You can get his cakes now for nothing,' said Rafael, pointing down the street. Flames were lick-

ing out through a door. People were again running. The boy looked up. Then he, too, began to run, stumblingly, toward what had been the Tolosano's pastry shop.

Rafael began to laugh. He could not stop laughing. He laughed at General Hernandez, at the president, at the mob whose uproar as it engaged in some new crime he could now hear again, at the stars above the river of darkness, at himself, at Vitoria. Dear God, what a merry world! What an infinite jest life was! Then the hopeless tears came into his eyes, and he stumbled along weeping and cursing and knocked three times at the door of Domingo the shoemaker.

As he did so, he heard the clang of Santa Eulalia's solitary fire engine, a red affair which was dragged by hand to the sound of an enormous bell and the rumble of iron-tired wheels on cobblestones. From time to time, despite this protection, various portions of the city burned down. Nobody seemed to mind.

Domingo opened the door instantly, pulled Rafael inside and clapped it shut again.

'One cannot be too careful,' he explained. 'Somebody might say, "There lives Domingo, the dirty Tolosano," and though I am not and never have been a Tolosano, and am as clean as the next man — which, thank God, isn't saying much in Santa Eulalia — they would have me chopped to bits and my shop in ruins before I could convince them. And after that it would do me no good to convince them.'

There were light steps outside; they paused, went on, died away.

Domingo drew Rafael toward an oil lamp which was burning on a table in the corner. 'Yes,' he said, after a careful inspection, 'it is really you, whole and solid. I have seen worse sights.' His manner was far different from that which was customary with him. His face, even in the poor light, was visibly flushed, his eyes shining with excitement. 'This is a night to remember!' he cried. 'This is a night worth living many nights to see! Were it not for my shop I should be with them out there. It was thus at the taking of Ciudad Diego, and yet it was better, for it was not our own city we were plundering. One cannot tear one's own city to pieces. People do not like it. And I was young then — young like yourself, though by no means so foolish. And now tell me what there is to tell, leaving out as many lies as you can.'

Rafael did so.

Domingo listened attentively. 'You are lucky,' he said, after Rafael had finished. 'It is a high compliment to your taste and also to Señorita Soberanes herself that his highness the president has chosen to favor her. Your fortune is made, my Rafael. You have but to step aside, and whether it is the general or the president who continues after this episode to govern the republic you will find yourself equally in favor. As for Señorita Soberanes, she will have more than you could ever have given her had things been otherwise. She will have the most beautiful clothes, brought directly from Paris, she will have servants,

and perhaps she will have an automobile. And in the end, when the general and the president have tired of her, you may have her again. Who will be the loser? If you are practical in these matters, you are sure to be happy.'

Domingo was grinning sardonically. Rafael longed to be angry, yet he could not be. It was as though he were gazing, not into a man's sorrowfully mocking eyes, but into the very heart of reality. Was this, after all, the truth that men lived by, and that other — that spot of meadow, that dancing in the shadows, that spirit that loved Vitoria and himself, that deep meaning that they had recognized at the first encounter of their glances — was that the dream?

'I should like to kill you,' said Rafael, 'if only I could also kill what you have told me.'

Domingo smiled and shook his head. 'No, it is life you would like to kill.'

'Then I shall kill myself.'

'No, you cannot even do that. You are twenty-three. You may hate life, but you cannot help loving it at the same time. It is like some women — you want to run away from them and you cannot. You detest them — but ah, the exquisite pleasure you find in them!'

The tumult in the city ebbed and flowed. The fire engine could be heard going occasionally. It always seemed to be en route somewhere, as though there were so many fires the firemen could not decide which to put out first. There were a few rifle or

revolver shots, but not many. Plainly this was not a revolution. It was merely an expression of a relatively minor emotion. It was Santa Eulalia announcing to the world, in its own jocose way, its determination to defend to the last drop of its blood its ancient and charming civilization. The president could well let his cavalry keep to their barracks or sit in ornamental poses in front of the ayuntamiento. He was at that moment the most popular man in Santa Eulalia. He summed up in his own plump person the hopes, the virtues, the beautiful aspirations of a nation.

Rafael and Domingo sat for some time in silence. A stir of cool air came through the high window and the lamp flared up and blackened its chimney.

'Such nights are necessary,' observed Domingo. 'They let out the bad blood. We shall sleep the more quietly later on, some more quietly than others, to be sure.'

'I shall not sleep again, ever, until I am dead,' said Rafael, convinced that he spoke the sober truth.

Domingo grinned. 'You are half asleep already. You have dozed more than once this last half-hour.'

The next moment both were as wide awake as they had ever been in their lives. Three heavy knocks rattled the street door. Domingo, springing up like a cat, ran into the inner room and returned with his rifle and bayonet. Rafael, too, found himself somehow on his feet, his heart pounding madly. He felt for his knife.

'If there are many of them and they are in earnest,' said Domingo, 'they will break the door down. If there are only a few, we can deal with them. In either case it will be best to open. But watch yourself, my Rafaelito. Be ready to kill, if necessary, and to die killing.'

His hand did not tremble as he turned the key and flung the door open. But instantly, in a single movement, he crossed the room and stood by the table, ready to upset the lamp and catch whatever assailants might come against the light of the street.

A voice asked, 'Is Rafael Gomez there?' There seemed to be but one man in the doorway.

It was Domingo who answered, 'And if he is, what do you want with him?'

'I have a message for him.'

Domingo beckoned. 'Come in, then, you and your message.'

The man entered. He was dressed in the imaginative uniform of an officer of the Santa Eulalian army — a blue tunic, a quantity of brass buttons, a red-lined cape. He also wore shoes, which to the common soldier was the most significant indication of his rank.

'You will pardon me, captain,' said Domingo, 'but on nights like this one has to be careful. May I ask you to lay your revolver on the table?'

The visitor hesitated. He was a smooth-shaven youngster, and behind his martial splendor seemed chubby and innocent. 'It is unusual,' he returned doubtfully. 'We are instructed not to put down our

arms while we are on duty. However ——' He placed the weapon in front of Domingo, who spun the chambers rapidly, shucked out the cartridges, and handed it back.

'I am Señor Gomez,' said Rafael, finding his voice for the first time. 'What is your message? Who wants to see me at this hour of the night?'

The captain bowed. 'I have the honor to say that his excellency General Hernandez wishes to speak to you on a matter of importance. I am instructed to take you to him.'

Rafael looked at Domingo, whose eagle eyes were closely scrutinizing the officer's face. There was a silence. 'I think you had better go,' Domingo said finally. 'I am sure his excellency's intentions are, as ever, of the kindliest nature.'

'Señor Gomez may be assured of that,' returned the officer. 'All Santa Eulalians are brothers to-night.'

Rafael put on his hat, took Domingo's hand for a moment, and followed his guide into the street.

'We are to have a war,' he said, by way of making conversation.

'I hope so. No one is killed in time of peace and therefore there are few promotions. I am twenty-five; I have been in the army for two years, and still I am only a major. If there is enough fighting, I shall certainly be a colonel and perhaps even a general.'

'But you may yourself be killed.'

The officer laughed. 'Not I. I have an ivory

crucifix on a silver chain that I have been promised will prevent that. I shall live to be sixty, at least, and be very rich, and have many beautiful mistresses.'

'Who told you that?'

'The man who sold me the chain and crucifix. He was not of our country, but he was devout. His name, I think, was Rosenstein.'

They had come into the plaza and now the captain led Rafael toward the door of the small residential building in the deep shadows at the right. Rafael recognized it with a start.

'But you told me,' he protested, 'that it was General Hernandez who desired to see me!'

The captain nodded. 'Yes, General Hernandez is here.' He pulled at a bell, and after an appreciable interval an old woman came bearing a candle. The Canon Roderigo, Rafael's father, had a fondness for ancient ways, and though he lived luxuriously enough his quarters were lighted entirely by tallow.

The captain spoke briefly to the servant, who conducted them down a hallway and knocked at a closed door.

'Who is there?' came a voice from within.

'The captain. Señor Gomez.'

'Let Señor Gomez come in.'

Rafael was pushed through the door, which shut gently behind him. He found himself in the presence of his father, the Canon Roderigo, and of his excellency General Hernandez, secretary of war, chief of staff, and generalisimo of the army of the republic.

The old adobe building was sufficiently cool, even on this night, or rather this early morning of a Eulalian summer, to make the glowing embers in the huge fireplace an agreeable sight. The canon and the general sat comfortably, one on either side of the fire. On a table between them stood two candles, a bottle of wine and another of liqueur, and a number of glasses. Neither man rose as Rafael entered, but the canon motioned politely for him to draw up a smaller chair which stood in a corner. The canon was an ascetic-looking man of a little less than fifty years; he looked, indeed, more ascetic than he was. His clean-shaven face was thin, his once black hair was nearly gray, but his dark eyes gazed out from under heavy brows with an occasional flash of fire.

'You are acquainted with General Hernandez?' asked the canon.

Rafael studied the general's face. All things considered, it seemed better to answer the question in the negative. He did so. 'It is an honor for a very humble citizen of the republic to appear in his excellency's presence,' he added. The general smiled slightly. It was a brave effort. Rafael could not help admiring him.

The general cleared his throat. 'Those of us who have the duty of serving the public are always happy to make the acquaintance of those who may be called upon to follow in our footsteps,' he replied. He was, under all circumstances, a man who never lacked for sonorous words. He looked at the canon

with humorous malice. 'Especially when they are so well introduced.'

Rafael was puzzled. What had brought these two together, at such a time, during such a crisis? As far as he knew they had never been intimate before. There had been, indeed, a marked coldness between the Church, as represented in Santa Eulalia, and the present national government. The canon, though not the titular head of the diocese, had made himself, by his energy and as a consequence of the failing health of the elderly bishop, its leader and spokesman. Rafael knew vaguely of the circumstances of the quarrel. The president, coming to his exalted office as a result of revolution, had desired to signalize his advent by reforms which would win popular approval. He had therefore taken land away from some of the larger proprietors and given it to the landless members of his victorious army. Inadvertently he had also appropriated lands belonging to the Church. The result was that, though he himself had continued to go to mass, the anticlerical party had insisted upon coming to his support. This was useful. It was also embarrassing.

But now Rafael recalled what Vitoria had told him and Domingo's comment upon her story. It was no longer the president and the general — it was the president or the general. The general would naturally resort to the president's enemies, the president to the general's enemies. The general and the canon had natively much in common. Both were aristocratic in their tastes and tendencies,

whereas the president could not too often assert that he was a friend of the common people. Both were sincerely conservative, whereas the president did not object to progress so long as he received his private percentage of the profits. He was quite friendly with that arch-protagonist of progress, Mr. Harris. They had, indeed, been on automobile trips together. Quite recently they had made a trip to the frontier of Nueva Tolosa, where there was some scenery which Mr. Harris considered very picturesque, and which he had examined very carefully.

'You have the double advantage, Señor Gomez,' the general was saying, 'of having won the good will — I have no doubt by a display of unusual virtues and abilities — not only of the canon, whose slightest wishes we all respect, but of the president himself. In fact, I received from his highness himself to-day a suggestion that a young man of your qualities — and may I add ancestry? — might be useful to us in case the present misunderstanding with our neighboring state should unhappily result in making it necessary for us to defend ourselves by force. The president understands that you are eager to be of service to your country.'

'I hope I do not differ from other citizens of Santa Eulalia in that respect,' returned Rafael.

'The president,' resumed General Hernandez, 'has asked that you be given a commission in the army of the republic. You will understand that this is a distinction to be prized, since, as the president

himself has said, the nation has volunteered en masse.'

'I am very grateful,' stammered Rafael. 'Though as your excellency doubtless knows, I am better acquainted with the law than with the duties of a soldier.'

'That can be remedied.' The general grinned sardonically. 'That is what wars are for. As to your courage and fighting qualities' — his hand, with a seemingly involuntary gesture, sought his throat — 'I think we can have no doubt of them. I think we can also add that private quarrels will be forgotten until the public's quarrel has been successfully ended.'

Rafael bowed. 'I shall try to deserve your excellency's good opinion.' The words seemed to say themselves. They were not the ones he had planned to address to General Hernandez when he should encounter him.

The general was looking at the canon, whose thoughts had momentarily wandered. The canon turned and addressed Rafael.

'My son,' he began, and then paused a moment. He would have spoken to any young man in the same fashion. Nevertheless, the general permitted himself the ghost of a leer, and the ghost of a sad amusement even flitted across the face of the canon himself. 'My son,' he resumed resolutely, 'I trust your attitude toward your country also speaks for your attitude toward your Church, your spiritual fatherland. I trust you are as ready to defend the

one as the other.' He did not wait for Rafael to say anything. 'At present our anxiety has to do with the possibility of an attack from without. All domestic differences of opinion must give way to the need of absolute unity. Nevertheless, dangers from without are not the only ones which threaten the republic's peace. The Church has its enemies, some of them in high places — even in very high places. As one of its loyal sons' — again the general's lips twitched under his mustache — 'we shall count upon you to render such service as may be necessary. In each case you will be acting for the public good and in the interests of your religion. To both these objects his excellency and I are equally devoted.'

Rafael realized that this conversation was only partially for his benefit. He was a small piece in a larger game these two men were playing.

The general bowed. 'Equally devoted, perhaps,' he remarked politely, 'but not equally gifted. I am but a dull sword at your eminence's disposal.'

'My general,' returned the canon briskly, 'you are far too modest. I don't know what we should do without you.' He gazed at General Hernandez in a certain way as he said this, and it seemed to Rafael that the general shivered a little. Then Rafael remembered the president's words, as Vitoria had quoted them, 'We should not want to change generals at a moment like this, especially in a manner that would cause pain to — your widow.'

The general picked up the phrase quickly. 'I

hope,' he protested, 'you will not have to do without me.'

'So do I.' The canon's eyes had something steely at the bottom of them. It seemed to Rafael that here was a game within a game. He wondered what would be left of this united Santa Eulalia, standing as one man against the foe, if all its jealousies, all its conspiracies, all its individual lusts for power, were stripped and exposed in all their nakedness.

The canon turned to Rafael. 'I understand,' he began, 'that you have withdrawn from the employ of Señor Sebastian.'

Rafael felt a guilty flush mounting to his cheeks. 'It is true ——' he said.

'And the reason ——?'

The General broke in hastily. 'Is this a confessional, your eminence? Señor Gomez was doubtless guilty of some youthful indiscretion. We have all' — he weighed the words carefully — 'been guilty of youthful indiscretions. I have wondered if even the servants of the Church have not their temptations — though, of course, they do not yield to them as do we lesser mortals. Let me speak from the point of view of a soldier. There are certain attributes, deplorable in a reverend father, unfortunate even in a lawyer, but not incompatible with the military virtues. In fact, these attributes, which out of deference to your cloth and to the young man's modesty, I will not describe in detail, are considered by some authorities to be indispensable to a first-class fighting man. They have even been

embodied in a proverb — which for the reasons I have just mentioned I cannot quote at the present moment — familiar to all military men. If Señor Gomez has sinned in his capacity of a lawyer, we can perhaps purge him of his sin by making him a soldier.'

The severity of the canon's expression did not relax. Rafael felt that at the moment his father, had he not been a priest, would have been glad enough to plunge a knife into the trim figure of his friend and ally. He merely said: 'He cannot for the present be both a soldier and a lawyer. You may take him and teach him such virtues as you are acquainted with. After that — who knows?'

Rafael rose. His father turned to him again. 'General Hernandez talked so interestingly,' he began, 'that I have almost forgotten to ask you a question which was on the tip of my tongue. I have described the manner in which the internal as well as the external peace of our beloved country is menaced. I have indicated that even the Mother Church, which has the welfare of its flock particularly at heart, possesses its enemies. Can we count on you to be loyal, not in one or two things, but in all things — my son?' It was almost as though he meant the last two words to carry a personal meaning, almost as though he had seen the ghost of a lost woman in the young man's eyes.

'I shall be loyal,' said Rafael, thinking of Vitoria solely, and of no other thing or person in the universe, 'to that which commands my loyalty.'

The canon studied his son's face. 'See that you do,' he concluded. 'And now, go with God, my son.'

Rafael found the knob of the door, opened it, went down the hallway, opened the outer door, and was again in the street.

All was quiet, except for the slight stir made by a patrol of soldiers emerging from the other side of the plaza. It was the half-light of the dawn. Another day was coming. Monday and Tuesday had changed the whole course of Rafael's life. What would Wednesday do?

V

THE dispute between Santa Eulalia and Nueva Tolosa, so far as it concerned the actual and measurable money loss sustained by the unfortunate demise of the two Eulalian merchants, had been referred to a committee of arbitration for settlement. There was no question that an amicable agreement upon this score could be reached in the course of time, and this naturally gave all peace-loving persons everywhere a great deal of satisfaction.

Unfortunately the point of honor involved could not be so easily adjusted. The president of the Republic of Santa Eulalia had requested that the miscreants guilty of the murder be brought to justice and duly punished. The president of the Republic of Nueva Tolosa had replied that he would be only too glad to do this, but that a diligent inquiry at the scene of the crime had failed to produce any clue as to the identity of the criminals. The investigation would be continued, but in the mean time he preferred not to shoot one or more citizens who might later on be proved innocent. The president of the Republic of Santa Eulalia had then suggested that the honor of his country might be satisfied, pending the discovery of some one to shoot, by the cession to Santa Eulalia of some square miles of territory lying along the frontier. Oddly enough, though the fact was not mentioned in the official interchanges, this

was the same territory which Mr. Harris, in company with the president of Santa Eulalia, had so recently visited and admired. Oddly enough, too, Mr. Harris had been in intimate consultation with the President at the very moment when General Hernandez, the Canon Roderigo, and Rafael were sitting together in front of the canon's cozy fire.

The relations between the two governments had always been cordial, except when each government's conception of the welfare of its people, or of those who affected to speak for the people, made cordiality for the moment impossible. There had been some causes of friction which every one regretted, but which no one seemed able to remove. The Republic of Nueva Tolosa had some miles of seacoast, but it had no really good port. To ship its products abroad or to import products from other countries, it was obliged either to follow a very costly and roundabout route or to use the port of Santa Eulalia. To the citizens of Santa Eulalia this situation seemed manifestly brought about by a Divine Providence, and they piously took every advantage of it. The result was that the citizens of Nueva Tolosa found themselves obliged to pay quite heavily for everything imported across their borders, while at the same time they received comparatively little for what they exported. Nueva Tolosa thus remained a somewhat backward country. Its schools were poor, its roads deficient, its population rude and quarrelsome. Its national temperament lacked the gayety which characterized that of the Eulalians. The Tolosanos

were given to melancholy. They were inhospitable. They could not see a joke.

But these facts, deplorable as they were, made the request of the president of Santa Eulalia seem all the more reasonable. Nueva Tolosa was not making intensive use of its fairly extensive territory. What real harm would it suffer if the inconsiderable acreage which Mr. Harris had admired were placed under another jurisdiction?

Unhappily the president of the Republic of Nueva Tolosa could not see the demand in this light. He had replied that his government would resist to the last drop of blood any cession of territory. The Eulalian president, after a consultation with Mr. Harris, had next offered a certain sum. The Tolosano president had replied that this was nowhere near large enough, and had added privately that he would also need a considerable personal indemnification for the mental anguish that any such transaction would cause him to suffer.

The president of the Republic of Santa Eulalia had retorted, after a further consultation with Mr. Harris, that he could not, to borrow one of Mr. Riley's vulgar phrases, raise the ante. No answer to this communication being forthcoming, he had issued an ultimatum. If the government of Nueva Tolosa did not give satisfaction within forty-eight hours, the government of Santa Eulalia would be reluctantly compelled to take steps to defend its honor. These steps, it was intimated, would lead in the direction of the Tolosano frontier — that is to

say, toward what had soon come to be called Eulalia Irredenta.

Such was the state of affairs on the morning after Rafael's interview with the canon and General Hernandez. Domingo, sallying forth while Rafael slept, had picked up some of the pertinent information and had guessed some, though not all, of the rest. He added some details of a less consequential nature.

The damage done by the patriotic demonstrations of the preceding night had not been so great as was at first supposed. A large number of windows had been broken, half a dozen shops and houses had been burned, and thirty-six individuals, rightly or wrongly thought to be Tolosanos, had been killed. Aside from this the night had passed without incident, and the president had issued a proclamation in which, while deploring the excesses of an irresponsible minority, he had praised the self-control and moderation of the greater portion of the citizenry of Santa Eulalia. The proclamation also urged every one to follow the good example already set and to remain calm under whatever provocation. It added that the government was doing everything it could to discover such spies and enemy aliens as were still at large and to put them where they could no longer be a source of annoyance.

Domingo also learned that Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson, who had been discussing politics all night in the Café de la Natividad, long after Mr. Harris had gone home, had had another fight, and that both were being treated for bruises and con-

tusions in the local hospital. It was a small hospital, which would make it convenient for them to have their brandy-and-soda during their — it was to be hoped — brief period of convalescence.

The mobilization of the Eulalian army was proceeding with great haste, although it was explained that this was merely a routine maneuver generally conducted at this time of the year, and that, besides, the republic considered a military display necessary to lend dignity to the funeral of the murdered merchants, which was to take place that afternoon.

Almost any Eulalian would have died without protest if promised such a funeral. The president and his cabinet, the members of both houses of Congress, the diplomatic corps, the bench and bar, the veterans of foreign wars, the officers and crew of the two gunboats which constituted the Eulalian navy — unfortunately laid up for several years past owing to delayed repairs — and, above all, the army, were to be in the parade, which would start at the ayuntamiento, take a turn around the city by way of the Alameda del Toro and the Calle de la Trinidad, and terminate at the cathedral, where the appropriate religious ceremonies would be performed.

Domingo was unqualifiedly enthusiastic at the turn affairs had taken, particularly as they affected the personal fortunes of his friend Rafael.

'It is clear,' he said, 'that the general has decided to use you instead of killing you. He can hardly kill you openly if he means to keep on good terms with your father. If he quarrels with your father, that

may alter matters. But that is not likely to happen until the war is over. And that, in a manner of speaking, will be never, for a few weeks of war will work more changes than twenty or thirty years of ordinary living and dying.'

Rafael waited — for the parade, which in common with every other inhabitant of Santa Eulalia, including Mr. Harris and the more or less battered Messrs. Fergueson and Riley, he was eager to see; for word from General Hernandez; above all, for night to come, when he might again go to meet Vitoria.

The first of these events arrived in its due season — that is to say, just after the midday siesta. The siesta was the central fact in life in Santa Eulalia. The energy that the Northern races devoted to adding to their stock of material goods and building themselves a more and more complex civilization, the Eulalians spent in resting. If a Eulalian could, he lay abed until nine or ten, and at ten had a light breakfast. At eleven he had an aperitive. About one o'clock he had lunch. After lunch came the siesta, which lasted until four o'clock, or even later. At four the model citizen drank coffee; from five until six or seven he strolled or sat in a café; at nine or ten he dined; between ten and one he danced or otherwise amused himself; at one he had the final meal of the day, or rather night; and by three or four o'clock in the morning he was generally in bed again. This was an ideal to which not every one could conform, but which all admired and all strove

for. But the siesta was the heart of the Santa Eulalian day. To belittle or curtail the siesta would have been a fatal blow to the national culture.

Santa Eulalia, therefore, took its hours of repose on this momentous Wednesday exactly as though it were any other Wednesday. It slept as though its liberties and its sacred honor were not at stake. The president slept, the general slept, the canon slept, the army slept, Messrs. Fergueson and Riley, influenced not only by the climate, the custom of the country and their natural inclinations, but also by their night of revelry and their honorable wounds, slumbered profoundly; in fact, almost every one slept but Mr. Harris.

Mr. Harris had a taste for mechanics, bred, no doubt, during his youthful experience on a Maine farm. He had retained as a hobby his professional interest in telegraphy, and this was possibly responsible for the fact that he possessed the first, and so far the only radio receiving set in Santa Eulalia. With this he was able to pick up programmes from Havana, New Orleans, and Mexico City, and sometimes even from New York, San Francisco, Buenos Ayres, and Santiago de Chile. It was really a prodigiously successful set. He also had an effective sending set, though of small dimensions, with which he was able to converse telegraphically with stations not too far away. Sometimes he talked with ships at sea, making use of the skill he had acquired long ago in Bangor. He spent the siesta hours on this particular day in making sure that this sending set

was in good order. He even tried a few sample messages and got replies.

The parade began to move promptly according to Eulalian standards; that is to say, not much more than an hour after the announced starting time. First came a guard of honor, then the remains of the murdered men in handsome hearses, then the ecclesiastical delegation, then the officials, the dozen most important in automobiles, others in carriages, still others on foot, then the army and navy. Here and there were bands, to the number of half a dozen, all playing at once, all playing different tunes. Nearly every Eulalian could play some musical instrument and nearly every one insisted upon doing so.

The sun shone, as it always shone in Santa Eulalia in the summer time, and the sky, if any one had taken the trouble to look at it, would have appeared of a delicate shade of light greenish blue that was almost peculiar, so it was said, to Santa Eulalia. If one stood in the sun, one soon became unpleasantly warm; if one stood in the shade, on a breezy corner, one soon became unpleasantly cool. Such was the climate of Santa Eulalia that every one could be satisfied. One could sit under a banana tree and gaze at snow-covered mountains. It was wonderful.

Rafael and Domingo stood side by side at the top of three stone steps near the corner of a street opening into the plaza. There was no longer any occasion for keeping out of sight, though Rafael, in view of his prospective military career, had bought a large

six-chambered American revolver at a hardware store. He had this in his pocket, loaded. It gave him a feeling of arrogance he had not had before. From where the two stood, they could see far down the street as the head of the procession came in sight — horses prancing, plumes waving, bands playing, flags flying, and everything, in short, as pretty and cheerful as only Santa Eulalia knew how to make a funeral. A great happy shout went up as the procession moved along, the joyful expression of a populace which had suddenly realized its own boredom and which now exulted in discovering something to be indignant and excited about.

Rafael fought against the contagion. What could it all mean to him? It was but a play on a tawdry stage. But he took off his hat as the hearses and flags went by, and he knelt, too, to the relics carried by the clergy, among whom went his father — a dignified, aloof, other-worldly figure.

The first of the bands was playing the national anthem of Santa Eulalia. This was a charming piece of music which had been originally a serenade. What it lacked in martial vigor it made up for in sentiment. There were tears in every one's eyes — in the president's, in the general's, in those of the members of both houses of Congress, including the Opposition delegates, who would have been still in prison, or perhaps shot by this time, had not the present crisis arisen. Messrs. Riley and Fergueson, whose bandaged heads were visible at the low windows of the hospital, were plainly moved, though

Mr. Fergueson, as usual, retained more of the Anglo-Saxon virtue of self-restraint.

Rafael happened to look down at Domingo, who was wiping his nose with the back of his hand and sniffling loudly. And suddenly Rafael, too, felt himself slipping, as though he had been washed overboard into a resistless current. The tide of mob emotion swept clear over his head. The voice that was singing so loudly in his ears, heard above the general tide of voices, was his own. He felt an immense personal sorrow for the two poor devils in the hearses. They had been alive like himself, had loved, had hoped, and here they were — done for, rotting parcels of earth. No band could play them back to life, no posthumous honors do them any pleasure. The pity of it!

The band was still playing. And these butchered corpses were Eulalians, his own townsmen, though as far as he knew he had never seen either of them in life. They had been foully done to death, far away from their own country, by men who spoke a different accent and whose clothes, manners, and habits were disgustingly unlike those of the people of Santa Eulalia. Rafael's hand fumbled for his revolver, to make sure it was there. Let the war come! He was ready.

The second band, the largest of the four, was playing a lively marching tune. The notes issued forth in that dry clear air like something tangible. They gushed upward above the sullen beat of the drum, soared like fountains, then broke into melodic

particles and showered themselves down upon the crowd. The whole central portion of the parade had taken up the rhythm. One looked along its length and saw flags, bayonets, swords, heads, shoulders, arms, legs, all swaying to it, feet all tramping to it. The crowd caught it up. Never was there a Eulalian who could keep still when catchy music was being played. It was as though a ripple, a series of ripples, of unified movement were running through the whole population of Santa Eulalia. Even the low white buildings on the side streets, the façade of the ayuntamiento, the stately front of the great cathedral, seemed to shake to it like leaves in the wind.

Domingo's hand fell upon Rafael's shoulder and clutched it like a great claw. The veteran's face was red as fire, his eyes shone like diamonds. All was gone now, all the philosophy, all the cynicism, all the sense of inner truth, and nothing remained but the Eulalian and the soldier. 'Viva!' Rafael heard him shouting with the rest. 'Viva el presidente! Viva Santa Eulalia! Kill the Tolosanos!' So the murdered men went up the steps and into the cathedral, to be received by incense and by chants and by organ music.

The crowd surged toward the great doors. Domingo and Rafael went with it, whether by their own will or because they were thrust forward by those behind them they could not have told. Nor, for that matter, could any one else in the mob. The pressure increased. The cathedral now contained as much humanity as its stone walls could hold without

bursting. Domingo and Rafael had reached the doors. There they stuck fast, but by standing on their toes, hands on the shoulders of those in front, they could see over hundreds of heads, through a cloud of incense, to the high altar.

Near the front the president, the general, and the other dignitaries of the Republic occupied positions of honor. Not far from them, in a conspicuous seat among the diplomatic corps, was the unfortunate ambassador from Nueva Tolosa, whose instructions to attend the ceremony, issued by his government at an earlier and more auspicious stage in the negotiations, had, through an oversight, not been countermanded. He was a very dark, very fat, very much-worried elderly gentleman, and he perspired freely. He was afraid of being torn to pieces before leaving Santa Eulalia — or rather he dreaded not being able to leave Santa Eulalia at all on that account. In this, as later events showed, he was not altogether unjustified. He was all the more alone on this occasion because Mr. Fergueson, the British consul, had not been able to attend.

Mr. Fergueson and the ambassador from Nueva Tolosa had been good friends, not so much because either had the least liking or respect for the other as from Mr. Fergueson's desire to demonstrate his own independence of spirit. He thought well of the Tolosanos, on the whole, not having to live with them. He also wished to sell them something, though this detail of his personal affairs he wisely kept to himself.

The mystic ceremonies of the mass went on solemnly and beautifully. There were larger cathedrals in Latin America, but none, certainly, in which these sacred things were better done. The canon prided himself justifiably on what might be called without the least irreverence good stage managership. The present proceedings, therefore, took on a dual aspect. Aside from being funeral services over the dead bodies of two beloved Eulalians, they were obviously a political gesture of the President. They were his method of convincing his own people and the people of the world at large how regrettable it was that citizens of Santa Eulalia should come to grief while going peaceably about their own affairs in foreign countries. In this effort the president had been successful, even more successful than he at first realized. But the canon and his fellow clericals were clearly in a position of vantage, since no funeral ceremonies could be held in the cathedral without their approval and coöperation. The canon was therefore seeing to it that this funeral was staged as exquisitely as any that had ever taken place in Latin America. There was more than that. Somehow he contrived, as the services progressed, to center about the cathedral, about the Church, about himself, those patriotic emotions which had been evoked by the president's parade. The affair of the dead merchants was no longer a squabble in an inn, it was no longer a dispute over a few square miles of territory, no matter how desirable Mr. Harris found them; it was a clash of civilization

with barbarism, of religion with atheism. The canon even found occasion to put this sentiment into words, to which the President, wriggle though he might in his official seat, had perforce to listen. The cause of God had had its enemies throughout the ages, said the canon. It still had its enemies, some of them beyond the national boundaries, some of them — he paused dramatically — within those boundaries. He had faith that it would ultimately be triumphant everywhere.

'Those Tolosanos, those bastards,' said a voice in Rafael's ear, 'are no better than Jews and infidels. It's time they were taught a lesson.'

Other bystanders made remarks in a similar vein, most of them not printable, or even such as could have been mentioned in the very liberal polite society of Santa Eulalia. They were all to the general effect that the Tolosanos were deficient in the refinements of civilization.

'Huns!' cried somebody, just outside the door. 'Huns, that's what they are!'

The word stirred vague recollections and the statement was applauded with vigor.

Again the great bell was tolling plangently. The bodies were being carried down the long aisles. Every one for a few moments was still. The gathering began to dissolve in the order in which it had formed, first the more important, then the less. The President's face was redder than usual as he came down the lane of staring faces, the general's rather more amiable than was customary.

The ambassador from Nueva Tolosa emerged with obvious reluctance. His skin was gray under its normal rich chocolate color. The sweat did not merely stand on his brow; it ran down his chin, and he mopped it off continuously with a white and purple handkerchief. His chin — or rather his series of chins — quivered, his breath came noisily. As he neared the door, people began to look at him in a calculating way. Once he hesitated, as though he had determined not to leave the confines of the sacred structure, but the gentle, implacable thrust of those behind carried him through the doors, down the steps, into the plaza.

His carriage would have been waiting for him there had not some of the more impatient members of the congregation already cut the traces, driven off the horses, and demolished the vehicle, which had borne the national arms of Nueva Tolosa. As it happened, however, the ambassador was to have no further need for a carriage.

Rafael and Domingo drifted along with the current, paying small attention to where they were going.

'I have never seen anything more beautiful,' remarked Domingo.

'The music, the incense and everything,' agreed Rafael. 'Yes, it was beautiful.'

Domingo rubbed his chin. His earlier mood was beginning to evaporate, like the effects of a volatile wine. 'I did not mean that so much,' he answered. Then he went on: 'I suppose you would think that

those two poor souls would go to paradise, after all the trouble that has been made over them, if any two sinners ever did.'

'I am not at all sure about those matters,' responded Rafael. 'Not so sure as my father is. But certainly all was done for them that could be done.'

'Undoubtedly. Yet now that I look back on it I cannot help thinking how surprised they will be if they wake up in a Christian heaven.'

'Not if they believed what the padres have told them,' said Rafael.

'That,' responded Domingo, 'is just the point. They didn't. You see, as I learned this morning, but forgot to tell you, our two Christian martyrs that you and I are going to war about were not Christians at all. They were Jews.'

A new sound, which squeamish persons might have considered unpleasant, had made itself heard behind them, in the plaza. The patriotic population of Santa Eulalia were butchering the ambassador of the Republic of Nueva Tolosa.

VI

A COMPREHENSIVE view of Santa Eulalia, shortly after the incidents just mentioned, would have revealed a number of phenomena not uninteresting to students of human affairs. Mr. Harris, as has been said, had passed the hours of the siesta in tinkering with his radio. He had continued this occupation during the funeral services, which as a Protestant and a private resident with no official position, he had not thought it necessary to attend. His room was a pleasant interior one, looking out upon a patio in which were some banana trees and a small fountain of clear water. It was almost too pleasant for a man who did not want to like Santa Eulalia too well. His breakfast was brought to him by the dark-eyed, dark-haired daughter of his landlady, though he generally took his other meals at the Café de la Natividad.

This girl was about eighteen years old, and sometimes Mr. Harris found himself wishing that she were a little less pretty, and then, paradoxically, that she might bring him his lunch and dinner as well as his breakfast. Her chief, almost her only defect was what seemed to Mr. Harris, with his sterling New England standards, a lack of modesty. His door was never locked; in fact it had no lock. When he first came, Antonia had set the tray down outside every morning, merely knocking to let him

know it was there. After a few days she began to bring it into the room and put it on the table beside the bed. Mr. Harris would pull the covers up to his chin and say good morning in rather bad Spanish and with a rather embarrassed manner. As his Spanish improved, he began to add remarks about the weather, and Antonia would reply, sometimes intelligibly, more often not, standing with her arms on her hips in the middle of the room.

Antonia, with her hands on her hips, her head a little to one side, looking at him out of the corners of her eyes, made Mr. Harris strangely uneasy and also strangely happy. A part of him wanted her to be there, and another part of him seemed to know that she was dangerous and wanted her to go away at once.

But this was not the end. As their friendship had progressed, Antonia had fallen into the habit of sitting down on the foot of the bed for five or ten minutes at a time while Mr. Harris ate his breakfast. Sometimes this gave Mr. Harris the wildest sort of ideas — ideas which were compatible neither with the career he had marked out for himself nor with his native conception of what was right and wrong, proper and improper, in the relations between the sexes.

Antonia had several times carried messages from Mr. Harris to the president. These, because of their confidential character, were usually delivered in person. In this way Antonia had not only added to her knowledge of human nature, of which the

president had a great deal, but had also strengthened her grasp upon the public affairs of the nation. Without knowing quite what Mr. Harris was up to, she took what seemed to be a sympathetic interest in his activities, and this caused her to bring to his attention, not only at breakfast, but at other times of the day, bits of information which she thought might interest him. It was Antonia, therefore, who interrupted Mr. Harris as he was idly revolving the dials of his receiving set.

'What are you doing?' asked Antonia, who knew perfectly well, having had it explained to her in broken Spanish several times already.

'Getting music,' said Mr. Harris. 'Getting nice music.'

'Show me how!' exclaimed Antonia, all pretty animation. She went close to the machine, which also necessitated her going close to Mr. Harris. Their hands touched. Mr. Harris's hands tingled. Her hair brushed his cheek. It tickled. Mr. Harris found himself getting hot and trembly. He stood straight up and backed off a few feet. He was thinking of his sainted mother, who was dead, and of his career, which was yet to be born.

'I am very busy, Antonia,' he said. 'Want something?'

Antonia spun on her heel and looked at him over her right shoulder. She could dance the fandango beautifully. 'Perhaps,' she said mysteriously. 'But I came to tell you something, something very interesting.'

'Well?' asked Mr. Harris, backing away a little more, yet not really wanting to back away.

'They have killed the ambassador,' said Antonia.

'Which ambassador?' Mr. Harris's thoughts were so confused that for the moment he did not remember that Santa Eulalia was honored by only one full-fledged embassy, that of its sister Republic of Nueva Tolosa.

'El Tolosano,' Antonia explained cheerfully, 'the fat one.'

'But they mustn't!' cried Mr. Harris, forgetting himself and speaking in English. 'Good God, they mustn't, they mustn't do such things!' He felt his career rocking on its foundations, and it was not only Antonia that was to blame.

Antonia affected to be startled. 'Why not?' she demanded, more or less at random. 'He was too fat. Besides, what is the difference? They will send another one.'

Mr. Harris pointed to the door. 'Go away!' he shouted in a rude voice. 'Go away!'

Antonia withdrew like a startled bird. At the door she turned to give Mr. Harris one more look, a very poignant, pathetic look. Mr. Harris melted. 'Not you, Antonia,' he explained, shaking his head to emphasize his point. 'Not you. Those others. You are a good girl, Antonia.' Antonia was not a good girl. She did not even want to be one. However she liked the compliment well enough, as coming from Mr. Harris, and she gave him a smile before she went.

She was hardly gone before Mr. Harris, in linen suit and panama hat, was in the street and hurrying, almost running, in the direction of the presidential palace. The early dusk of a gala evening was already beginning to settle over the city. The mountains toward the sea rose like a purple wall; those on the interior, which were higher and bleaker, had assumed marvelous colors, among which the softest, most glowing lavender predominated. One or two luscious tropical stars showed overhead, and Venus was going down brilliantly. This was a pity, for the Eulalians were great worshipers of Venus, and an arrangement which would have permitted the planet to be visible during the hours of darkness every night in the year would have been appropriate. After the riot of the night before, the parade and the final burst of high spirits which had culminated in the murder of the ambassador, the inhabitants of this favored city had relapsed for a few hours into a calmer, though by no means somber mood. This was what a later historian referred to as the honeymoon period of the great conflict.

Every one was glad to be released from an old routine; no one had been compressed into a new routine. There was to be a war, but no Eulalian, with the exception of the two massacred peddlers, whom no one could remember having seen alive, had yet been killed. Nor did any one expect to be — it was always some one else who got killed. The typical Eulalian was not, as some of his severer critics had insisted, indifferent to the value of

human life; it was only the value of other lives than his own to which he was indifferent. On this particular evening he was not troubled by thoughts of death at all. He was having a good time, an even better time than usual, which was saying a good deal.

Not that there was not abundant evidence of approaching hostilities. That, indeed, was part of the fun. Troops brought in from the northern and southern provinces, added to those of the regular garrison, made a grand display. Military companies, enlisted among the young gentry of the city and composed entirely of officers, had put on their handsome uniforms and were parading the streets, in pairs and groups. A few wretched peons from the country districts, who had been among the first to volunteer, were locked up in the barracks or in the commodious city and state prisons until their officers could find time to tell them what it was all about, but as they were not in sight nobody worried about them.

All the merchants, especially those who sold food, drink, and other means of carnal enjoyment — the more carnal the better on this particular evening — were doing a rushing business. Prices had gone up within the past twenty-four hours, but as yet no one thought to grumble. It was too enchanting, too uplifting an evening on which to grumble. Soldiers and citizenry of both sexes strolled through plazas and along the esplanades, sat in front of the cafés, crammed the cantinas and gambling-halls and even less respectable places of entertainment, locked

arms and swept a whole street at a time, singing patriotic songs. Whenever an official or an officer with sufficient gold lace on his uniform to indicate high rank passed by, he was greeted with wild cheers. Bulletins announcing the progress of the negotiations and of the preparations for national defense were posted on every blank wall. *El Telegrafeo*, the only daily newspaper in the country, surprised every one, even its editors, by getting out an extra.

As the evening wore on, the city became, if possible, gayer. There was always a distressing amount of love-making in public places in Santa Eulalia — distressing, that is, for those who were too old or too busy or too ugly or too good to make love — but upon this occasion there were several times as much as usual. Before long every soldier was accompanied by at least one girl. Even at this there were some girls left over, and Mr. Harris, though in civilian clothing and obviously a foreigner, several times escaped unasked embraces only by dodging and running.

On the whole, however, he had only a confused impression of what was going on. His mind was intent upon his errand, for his errand had a great deal to do with the immediate development of his career. He dashed across the plaza, reached the presidential palace, brushed the guards aside, and demanded of a startled secretary that he be shown without delay into the presidential presence. Something in his manner, joined to the fact that the secre-

tary was well acquainted with him as a result of previous visits, led to his instant admittal.

The president was snatching a brief moment of repose after an exacting day and a heavy dinner. He sat behind a large desk, in a spacious apartment adorned with the portraits of former chief executives of Santa Eulalia — fitting reminders of mortality. He had pulled out a drawer of the desk and put his feet in it, and he was smoking a handsome black cigar, one of a box which Mr. Harris himself had given him a day or two before.

A stenographer was leaving the room with that easy and graceful motion so characteristic of the feminine members of the presidential entourage. She turned at the door and darted a coquettish glance at Mr. Harris. She would have darted a coquettish glance at almost any male who was neither infantile nor completely senile. But Mr. Harris was in no mood for blandishments. He waited until the door had closed. Then he began.

'I've just heard about the ambassador,' he said, in a voice unusually loud for him. He spoke in English, with which the president was passably familiar.

The president sighed. 'He was a very pleasant man,' he observed. 'I shall miss him. They will hardly send so agreeable a person next time.'

'Look here!' cried Mr. Harris. 'Do you realize what this means? Do you realize what people in other countries are going to say about it? Do you

realize what will be said about it in Washington? It's barbarous, that's what it is.'

'It was most unfortunate,' the President conceded. 'I am sorry it happened.'

Mr. Harris sat down heavily in a plush chair with an ornate gold back. 'Sorry!' he moaned. 'Sorry! You talk as though some one had accidentally stepped on the ambassador's toe. What good does it do to be sorry? You've ruined everything. I don't know how I'm going to explain it.'

'He ought to have known better than to go to the funeral. I could have told him that.' The president was losing his nonchalance under Mr. Harris's querulousness.

'You could have protected him. You had hundreds of troops in and around the plaza.'

The president's heavy-lidded eyes opened wide. 'But the troops helped kill him,' he explained. 'No one had remembered to tell them not to.'

'It doesn't matter,' returned Mr. Harris mournfully, letting his chin sink into his pale hands. 'You have lost the sympathy of the civilized world. That means no more money, no more ammunition. It may mean the marines — on the wrong side.'

'But why didn't you tell me this before?' the president demanded with an injured air. 'Somebody always gets killed at times like this. One expects people to be killed when there is a war.'

'War is one thing and murder is another,' retorted Mr. Harris, who was quite sure of his ground on this point. There was a long sad silence. The

president, still puffing at his cigar, looked perplexed and hurt. Finally Mr. Harris sat up with an air of resolution. 'We must make the best we can of it,' he said. 'You must issue a proclamation disclaiming all responsibility for what has happened and promising to punish the guilty individuals. You must send the ambassador back, if your constituents have left anything of him, under a flag of truce, and with apologies.'

'Apologies!' cried the president. 'To those monkeys!'

'Yes,' said Mr. Harris firmly, 'apologies. And unless you want me to drop you like a hot potato, you must promise that there will be no more of this. There must be no more rioting in the capital, and you must not allow your soldiers to kill prisoners, to loot captured villages, or to take liberties with women.'

'But, my God!' cried the president incredulously, 'why have a war at all?'

'If you don't do as I say,' answered Mr. Harris, 'you can have a war if you still wish one, but you will be beaten. I am in touch with the captain of the Lady Anne. It will be a perfectly simple matter for me to warn him, in view of the disturbed conditions in this city, not to try to land here. He might even think it best, if the sea was not too rough, to put his cargo ashore by lighter at one of the little harbors farther south. If he were in a hurry, he might make a mistake and land it in Tolosano territory. Or we might conclude to have him take it back to New Orleans.'

The president looked thoughtfully at Mr. Harris. The Lady Anne was bringing a consignment of machine guns, together with an airplane and an aviator, which Mr. Harris had suggested ordering some weeks before in case international difficulties developed. Mr. Harris's company had even been generous enough to assist in financing the purchase.

'It would be easy to have you shot,' remarked the president, after some moments of reflection.

Mr. Harris smiled wanly. 'Don't try to be funny,' he said.

The two allies gazed at each other unhappily across the table. Mr. Harris thought of his career. Had he gone too far? Had he mismanaged things? Was he about to fail, because of this fat fool, just as he had his hand on the supreme opportunity? At this precise moment some one knocked loudly on the door.

While the events which had brought Mr. Harris to the presidential mansion were taking place, Domingo and Rafael had first had a little wine in a café, and had then made their way slowly, through groups of soldiers and women, toward Domingo's shop.

One girl jumped out of the crowd and flung her arms around Rafael's neck. 'Come, my pretty boy!' she cried. 'You must not be alone on a night like this when every one is happy. Come and buy me a drink.'

Rafael pulled away and shook his head laughingly.

'Another night,' he answered, not thinking much of the implication of the words.

Domingo, who had gone some steps in advance, swung round and caught the situation in the flash of an eye. 'He has a woman already,' he explained, 'the most beautiful woman in the world, next to yourself, señorita. But I have no woman at all.'

The girl scrutinized him carefully. 'I like the young ones best,' she said, 'but if I cannot have him ——'

Domingo swept an arm around her and kissed her masterfully. 'My hair is gray,' said he gayly, 'and my first kiss was before you were dry behind the ears. They do not have such kisses nowadays! But we old soldiers do not burn out like ordinary men. My heart is as young as yours, señorita, it is as young as yours.'

The girl pouted, but caught his arm. 'Come, then,' she agreed, 'a drink first.'

'And afterwards ——!' Domingo chucked her under the chin.

'And afterwards — quien sabe?'

Domingo grinned at Rafael and went off with a swagger. Rafael continued toward the shop. Was this what love meant, he wondered? Was this what it all came to in the end? The mystery which he and Vitoria had seemed to share, was it a cheap subterfuge, a curtain of gold and glory with nothing but tawdriness behind? Yet he knew that in her presence the faith, the magic would return.

He yearned with desperate homesickness, not

altogether physical, for that little spot of ground, her meadow, walled about by an invisible loveliness and illusion through which this cruel, mad, babbling outer world could not break in upon them. He would see her that night. For that alone he could continue to live, keep from going mad. But he shivered with a new fear. Something of this sadistic insanity of Santa Eulalia, this obscene folly that was abroad, had been running that afternoon in his own veins. What if he himself should change, despite all he could do, and the dear magic, by his own fault and failure, forever disappear?

He was not left long to these speculations. At Domingo's door he found a ragged soldier leaning patiently against the wall, a cigarette drooping from the corner of a mouth too languid to hold it straight. The man presented a note. It was an order to report immediately at the offices of the general.

General Hernandez's offices were in a building adjacent to the presidential palace. Rafael made his way there, the soldier following modestly three paces to the rear. He presented his order to a sentry, who saluted respectfully and conducted him to an anteroom with chairs ranged about the wall, where a number of men, some in uniform and some in civilian clothes, were waiting to see the general. The place buzzed with activity. Two or three groups were engaged in voluble discussion. An energetic little man paced to and fro, stopping to ask questions of any who would listen to him. How long

would the war last, he wanted to know? How many troops would each side put into the field? He snapped his fingers, drummed on the chairs and tables, went to the window, put on his hat, took it off again. It was whispered, correctly, that he was a clothing contractor who hoped to sell a large order to the government.

Twilight came, then night. The lamps were lighted in the plaza. There was a long interval, during which no one either came or went. It was rumored that the general was having dinner. Several men finally got up and withdrew. The clothing contractor was plainly on the verge of nervous prostration. An aide-de-camp appeared at last and looked about inquiringly. Rafael's heart beat violently as the man's eye rested on him. He was led through two doors and found himself in the presence of General Hernandez — for the third time.

'I have received your orders,' said Rafael.

The general, squared off behind his desk in military style, glanced up after a moment, but did not rise. He was dressed with extreme neatness and looked as though he had at that very moment finished being shaved. His spirits, too, were evidently good. One would have said that he enjoyed his job, or that he had some especially pleasant experience in prospect.

'Ah, yes,' he said at last. 'Señor Gomez, we shall have to think up another title for you. In the mean time, what would you like to do, to borrow a phrase from the late president of one of our neighboring

republics, to make the world safe for democracy? The business of war is to kill as many as possible of the enemy. Can you suggest any new way of killing Tolosanos?'

'I have been in a position in which I could have killed one Tolosano — or any one else who stood in my path,' said Rafael. 'But in war I am afraid I shall have to be taught.'

'I have thought about that,' went on General Hernandez, with a grim compression of the lips, 'and I have decided to place you in a position in which you will acquire the rudiments of the profession as soon as possible. I am therefore going to appoint you a member of my staff.'

Rafael stared. 'I had not expected ——' he began.

'Nor I, until yesterday. But it happens, as you know, that certain influences have been exerted in your behalf. It happens, too, that we are, in a sense, notwithstanding the difference in years, experience, and rank, in the same boat. We both have a somewhat similar grievance against a certain exalted personage. But this is merely incidental. I shall be quite frank with you. I wish to retain the good opinion of your father the canon. Between us we can do much for Santa Eulalia. Divided, we cannot even displace the present apology for a government, not to say set up a new one of our own. You may perhaps serve as a link between us. If you can do so, you may ask what you will of the future. These people need to be disciplined, governed, held

down. We have had enough of what is called democracy. We require the iron hand — Napoleon, Bismarck, Mussolini. Well' — the general's chest expanded as he spoke — 'that is my rôle in Santa Eulalia. You see, I may be a valuable ally. As for Señorita Soberanes ——'

'As for Señorita Soberanes,' broke in Rafael, 'I have but this to say, that I shall never voluntarily give her up to any one, no matter whom.'

The general smiled again, but sourly. 'That is a noble speech, my young friend, worthy of a hero of the cinema. You remind me a little of — well, let me see — it is no great matter. You should perhaps try the cinema, if you live. You have the face and figure for it, and you have the faith in nobility, purity, love, and the other elements of a good cinema. Meanwhile, I am sure that we understand one another. I think you will not presume on — on a certain degree of informality in our past relations, and that I may rely upon you to be a good subordinate.'

'In all respects but one,' replied Rafael proudly. 'In that respect I shall not take orders from any one. But as to who rules Santa Eulalia, I do not care a straw.'

'Then,' said General Hernandez, 'we shall call a truce. If worse comes to worse we may be able, on the other matter, to — shall I say compromise?'

Rafael had been standing with his hand on the knob of the door. He had not had time to answer when he felt the knob turn in his hand and the door opened so suddenly as almost to knock him off his

feet. It was the aide-de-camp whom Rafael had seen before. His face bore signs of excitement and his voice was not steady. He strode across the room, paying no attention to Rafael, and laid a yellow paper on the general's desk.

'My general,' he said, 'this has just arrived by the telegraph from Santa Clara. I thought you should see it at once.'

The general unfolded the slip and read it attentively. His expression did not change, but after a moment he picked up the message and read it again. Then a swift transformation came over him. He sprang to his feet, then sat down and hurriedly scribbled on a pad of paper.

'You will send for these gentlemen at once,' he ordered, giving the paper to the aide-de-camp. 'If I have not returned, they are to wait. I am going to the palace. Clear out the anteroom. I have no time to see any one.'

Rafael hesitated as the door swung open. He had a glimpse of the clothing contractor being shoved unceremoniously out of the room, his arms waving like windmills, his volubility increasing at every step.

The general himself was now at the door. 'You may come with me,' he directed, with a glance over his shoulder. 'I may have use for you.'

He went down the corridor at a great pace, with Rafael hard upon his heels. The distance was not far. They entered the executive mansion to the rattle of sentries' rifles brought to the salute, made their way without a word to any one to a

door with which the general seemed familiar, and knocked.

For a moment there was no answer, and the general knocked again, violently, and without more ado entered. Rafael, dazed by the rapidity with which events were moving about him, stepped inside behind his chief. He saw the president sitting on one side of a large desk and Mr. Harris on the other, the president very red and Mr. Harris very pale. They seemed to have been frozen into immobility, either by General Hernandez's knock, or by something that had happened just previously.

The general advanced to the desk, nodding curtly to Mr. Harris. 'Your highness,' he began abruptly, 'we have had news.' He threw down the yellow telegraphic slip. 'The Tolosanos have crossed the frontier without a declaration of war. They have twenty-five hundred infantry on the march and five hundred cavalry. They have taken Santa Maria, Villareal, and San Cristoforo. Our frontier guards have been massacred. General Castro's cavalry, three hundred strong, has been cut to pieces. They are advancing rapidly, killing and burning as they come. They have shot the mayor of Santa Maria. We have no troops between Santa Clara and the capital strong enough to stop them.'

Rafael's astonishment at this history of calamity was only equaled by his surprise at the president's reception of it. His highness did not turn pale. Perhaps that was because he was not more capable of blanching than he was of blushing. But it was not

so easy to understand why he should lean back in his chair and laugh until every fat fold in his body seemed to be shaking, laugh until he choked and had to put down his cigar and cough. His eyes sought those of Mr. Harris, who had changed neither his position nor his expression. His mouth opened as though he were about to say something to Mr. Harris, but he thought better of it and spoke to the general again.

'When did all this happen?' he demanded.

The general consulted the yellow slip. 'They must have planned it two days ago, at least. They actually crossed the frontier just before midnight last night, before receiving your highness's last communication. They took Santa Maria at dawn this morning.'

'And when,' asked the president eagerly, 'when did they shoot the mayor?'

'That seems to have taken place immediately after the capture of the village. His son made faces at one of the Tolosano officers.'

'Magnificent!' cried the president, banging his clenched fist on the desk. 'Magnificent, my general! Magnificent, Señor Harris! What about the sympathy of the civilized world now, Señor Harris? A small difference of opinion arises. Santa Eulalia, like the peace-loving government it is, tries to settle this difference first by direct negotiation, then by arbitration. Nueva Tolosa takes advantage of our confidence in her honor to attack us under cover of night, sacking our villages, butchering our citizens.'

'That is one way of putting it,' returned the general dryly. 'Another way is that we did not suspect the Tolosanos of having spirit enough to do anything of the kind. If we had, we should have done it first.'

'That is a pleasant jest between friends and comrades,' replied the president, 'but it will not appear on the records. No, my general! Señor Harris, we have a mayor for their ambassador. I knew him personally, an estimable man, the father of eleven children. Perhaps they all made faces at the Tolosanos, but even then our case is strong.'

Mr. Harris was on his feet now, trembling with excitement. 'You are right, your highness,' he cried. 'You don't deserve it after what you allowed to happen last night and to-day, but I think perhaps Nueva Tolosa has saved the day for you. The death of the ambassador, the affair of last night, are indeed deplorable, and you must not pretend they are not. But I think we may convince the public opinion of the world that these unfortunate events were the direct result of the uncalled-for invasion of your territory. I propose to get in touch immediately with the editor of *El Telegrafeo*, who is the local correspondent of several important newspapers in New York, Paris, and London.'

'That will be simple,' answered the president. 'I have found our local editors very sympathetic. Those who were not sympathetic have either died or left the country.'

'I had already taken some precautions on my own

account to ensure his accuracy,' went on Mr. Harris. 'He is one of my salaried advisers. I am sure he will be able to present our case in such a way as to convince the world at large that we are fighting for the right. I think he may also be able to assist you with the proclamation which you will want to issue before morning. On the whole, I congratulate you. I hope you will pardon me if I was somewhat direct in my speech when I first came in.'

'Pardon you!' cried his highness, rising for the first time and balancing himself like a Napoleon on his two pudgy legs. 'Pardon you! My dear friend, there is nothing to pardon. I recognize you as a benefactor of Santa Eulalia. I am the more grateful because you are a stranger with no obligations toward us. You may be sure that I shall acknowledge and reward your services as soon as the present crisis is over. I see a new dawn for Santa Eulalia — peace, prosperity, the development of our national resources, the extension of our boundaries to their logical limits, a dominating position in the affairs of Latin America. Mexico under Diaz — that shall be Santa Eulalia under my administration.'

The general had been listening with something much like a sneer upon his handsome countenance. He now spoke again. 'Your highness seems to forget,' he said, 'that a slight military problem still remains. The Tolosanos will certainly take Santa Clara, if they have not already done so. Our troops in the capital are strong on paper, but we had not planned upon having them ready to fight so soon.

Santa Clara is not so far from the capital as I could wish. The Tolosanos will take the arsenal at Monte Rio. Having won some easy victories, they will think themselves invincible. Our troops, unless we are careful, may share the same delusion.'

Mr. Harris sat down again. The president tried to bluff it out. 'My dear general!' He began to waddle up and down the room, puffing furiously at cigars which he lighted one after another and then threw away. 'My dear general, aren't you too pessimistic? All that you say may be true, but what of it? If the Tolosanos win victories at first, we shall have a longer war. If we have a longer war, we shall be able to ask more of them when the war is over.'

'Under certain circumstances,' answered General Hernandez grimly, 'it may not be a long war.' Rafael looked at him inquiringly. Was it, perhaps, a part of his game to exaggerate the seriousness of the situation? But the general was continuing. 'As your highness and our friend, Señor Harris, are both aware, a shipment of machine guns and an airplane are now on their way to us by sea. Unfortunately there have been delays — a slide in the Panama Canal, was it not, Señor Harris? And, after that, bad weather?'

'I have been in touch with them,' explained Mr. Harris. 'This is Wednesday. They should arrive by Friday, or Saturday morning at the latest.'

'Quite so.' The general still looked grave. 'Under ordinary circumstances these munitions were merely an extra precaution. If the Tolosanos had behaved

as we expected, we could have beaten them with what we have. But on your advice, as you may remember, we moved certain essential parts of our equipment to the arsenal at Monte Rio, in order to be nearer the frontier in case it became necessary to act in haste. It happens to be the Tolosanos who have acted in haste.'

'I wonder,' said Mr. Harris thoughtfully, 'who put them up to it.'

The president and the general looked at each other and then each looked at Mr. Harris. There was an awkward silence. 'Who would have anything to gain by putting them up to it?' asked the general.

'Obviously,' resumed Mr. Harris, 'some one who was either not in sympathy with the national aspirations of the republic, or with the international and domestic policies of the present administration. I might suggest that the British consul, Mr. Fergueson, has been in close touch with the government of Nueva Tolosa.'

'But what can we do about that?' demanded the president peevishly. 'The English are so touchy. If we were to shoot him, they would make trouble.'

There was another awkward silence. It was again the general who broke it. 'Whatever the cause,' he said, 'the result is evident. My opinion is that with the arsenal at Monte Rio in the hands of the Tolosanos, and with our cargo of munitions still at sea, we shall have what you Americans call an even break.'

'You mean,' demanded Mr. Harris anxiously, 'that the Tolosanos might possibly take the city?'

'A soldier must never expect to be defeated, though he should always prepare to be. But it is quite possible. And in that case there will be — another sort of fiesta.'

'But what are you going to do?'

'All that I can. I shall begin throwing troops at the enemy to-morrow morning. I shall hold a council of war immediately. We can take the troops by the railroad to within a few miles of Santa Clara. The first regiments to arrive will be destroyed, but they will delay the advance.'

'It seems to me,' Mr. Harris said, 'that in view of the circumstances it will be important that our cargo should arrive and be delivered as soon as possible. If it were to arrive too late, or to fall into the wrong hands ——' He paused because a thought had struck him.

'It may well be,' assented the general, 'that whoever gets this cargo will be master of Santa Eulalia.'

This was exactly the thought which had occurred to Mr. Harris. But Mr. Harris had gone a step farther. He himself had the only radio sending set then operating in Santa Eulalia. Through that set alone could any message reach the captain of the munitions ship. He was not certain whether or not the local telegraph operators could handle a radio sending set, but he made a mental note of certain steps to take to render the instrument innocuous when it was not under his personal super-

vision. He was, he told himself as he sat there, the master of Santa Eulalia. He did not think that either the general or the president fully realized that fact. He did not care to have them realize it at present. He therefore rose rather hastily in order to prevent the conversation from going farther in the direction in which it had started.

'You will be very busy,' he said politely. 'I must not take any more of your time. I shall go now and see the editor of *El Telegrafeo*. I shall then ask him, if you wish, to get in touch with you. I think he will be able to help you considerably with the proclamation. If you care to have us he and I may even be able to outline something for your consideration.'

'Very well.' The president had resumed his chair and regained some of his dignity. 'I think you are sufficiently familiar with my ideas on the subject.'

When Mr. Harris had withdrawn, the general closed the door carefully after him and turned to the president. 'You have full confidence in him?'

'As much as I have in you yourself, my dear general.'

'Ah!' The general bowed. 'I am sure Señor Harris would be flattered, your highness. And now, unless you have further need of me, I must go to my duties. I shall return before leaving for the front with a completed plan for your approval. The meeting of Congress will, I suppose, compel you to remain here.'

'I had almost forgotten it,' said the president.

'I shall have to prepare my speech. Do you know, general, I almost envy you soldiers who have nothing to do but fight. You lead such simple, straightforward lives.'

'You flatter us, your highness,' returned the general suavely.

'One moment more.' The president threw away his cigar and lit a new one. Mr. Harris's box was almost empty. 'Is there anything we can do to hurry that ship?'

'I am afraid not. All we can do is to see that it is promptly unloaded and well guarded as soon as it comes into port. The airplane company has sent an aviator with some war experience. He should be able to fly within a few hours after his arrival. I am having some trees cut down along the esplanade so that he will have no difficulty in getting up. You may make your mind easy. I shall do all I can to make the airplane and the machine guns immediately useful.'

Again there was one of those thoughtful pauses which so often occurred in conversations between Santa Eulalia's two most distinguished citizens. The president's wandering eye fell upon Rafael.

'And this young man?' He turned inquiringly to the general. 'I do not remember to have seen him before.'

The general made an introductory gesture. 'You must pardon me. I supposed you were already acquainted. This is the young man whom you asked me to bring to you. He is a — relative — of our

friend the canon. He is also a friend, I believe, of another of our mutual acquaintances.'

The president's interest noticeably increased. 'You are very young, Señor ——.'

'Gomez,' said Rafael. It was the first word he had spoken during the entire interview. 'As to my being young, that is something that can be cured.'

The president smiled politely. 'There is no disease from which one is more certain to recover — is there, my general? And what are you to do for General Hernandez?'

'He has honored me by making me a member of his staff.'

'Ah, yes. You will learn much. And what rank have you given him, general?'

'None so far. Shall we say captain?'

The president's greedy, twinkling eyes grew brighter. 'No, I think he deserves more than that. I think we shall make him — let me see — a major.'

'Very good.' The general's voice expressed polite surprise. 'It shall be Major Gomez.'

'You must pardon me, general, if I beg you to lend him to me for a few moments. I am interested in young men and their careers. I have some questions to ask him.'

The general bowed stiffly. 'You will be good enough to report to me, Major Gomez. Good-night, your highness.'

'Good-night, my general.'

Rafael and the president were left alone. 'You doubtless know,' said the president, 'that you do

not owe your appointment entirely to the favor of your father the canon.' Rafael nodded in token of assent. 'You have,' the president continued, 'a more influential backer. In fact, I cannot think of any one at this moment whom I should be more willing to go to some pains to please. You understand me?'

Rafael felt the flame rising in his cheeks. 'Perfectly, your highness.'

The president was lighting another cigar, his tenth or eleventh or twelfth. 'I am not sure,' he continued, 'how seriously you young men take these attachments. But I think you will understand that this one of yours, if it exists, is, for the moment, shall I say impracticable? I can see that you are a young man of considerable ability. I know that you come of an excellent family, at least on one side. I know also that so far you have had little to thank your father for, except for bringing you into the world. If you will be sensible about that and one or two other matters, I can promise that to-day's will not be your last promotion. The republic knows how to reward those who are loyal.'

Rafael felt himself trembling with the desire to do violence to this living mass of grossness. He trembled so that he could not speak. The president evidently mistook this silence for acquiescence.

'You are behaving admirably,' said he. 'I appreciate it. So, too, will the lovely señorita, who has, I know, a sincere interest in your welfare.' But something in Rafael's expression caused him to reach toward a drawer in the desk at his right.

Rafael was coming toward him, his fingers like claws of a wild beast about to clutch a human throat. 'Fat pig!' cried Rafael. To get at this monster, to kill him, to die, if need be, killing him! 'Fat pig! Monkey! Ordure!' But the president's hand, coming up with a loaded revolver pointed at his face, arrested him. He wanted to kill, he was willing to die, but it was a physical impossibility to go a step nearer that little circle of steel.

The president laughed. 'We public men have to be prepared for these little emergencies, Major Gomez — sometimes even in the presence of our own trusted officers. You will feel better in a moment. The general excitement has momentarily caused you to forget yourself. And this reminds me that I have myself forgotten something which I intended to give you when General Hernandez brought you to me. It is a note from a lady. You will perhaps wonder how it came into my possession. That is simple enough. I asked her for it, as well as for another message for myself.'

The president reached into the desk which had contained the revolver and pulled out a small sealed envelope, keeping the weapon pointed at Rafael as he did so. He threw the envelope across the table and Rafael picked it up.

For an instant he could not open it. His fingers were powerless. Then he gathered strength and tore the flap. There were two lines inside, in a handwriting he would have recognized in hell — in a handwriting he did at this moment recognize in hell.

'You must not see me any more.' It was signed, 'Vitoria.'

He looked at it for a moment dumbly. Then he tore it into very small pieces, and one by one let them fall. So they were right, after all, Domingo, the general, the president. It was a pig world, a monkey world. No woman was clean and no man honorable. Men fought and died like the beasts. Power and money and lust were all there was in the universe. There was no dear mystery of love, no trembling of things exquisite and invisible, no hope, no meaning, anywhere, ever.

He turned to the president. 'Why did you not shoot instead?' he demanded. 'Shoot now! I will stand quite still.'

The president reflected. 'I am not accustomed to being called a pig. On the other hand, there are two reasons for not killing you now. One is that I am not yet ready to measure strength with your father the canon. The other is that I should be breaking my part of a bargain — and a Eulalian gentleman never breaks a promise made to a lady.'

'As you wish,' said Rafael. 'It does not matter. We are all pigs. I thought I was insulting you. I now see that I was not. My quarrel is — I see it now — with life. It is life that has us all by the throat, yourself, the general, myself, my father the canon, and that other whose name I cannot now speak. It is life that is the great traitor, the great pig.'

The president's fat face revealed the eternal

pathos of a simple mind grappling with fundamental mystery.

'Since that is so,' Rafael resumed, 'I shall myself play the pig and wallow with the rest of you. I accept your wars, your murders, your fornications, your conspiracies. You may keep what you have won. But guard yourself — my tusks may be sharper than you think.'

His eyes were not upon the president as he closed the door. They saw only scattered bits of paper strewn upon the rug in front of the desk. There, too, his youth was strewn. He pulled the knob and heard the latch click. His youth was gone.

He crossed the street to the general's headquarters. The sky was full of stars — bubbles, no doubt, that would break and disappear if one pricked them with a pin.

VII

'Listen to this,' said Mr. Riley. He and Mr. Fergueson, almost completely recovered from their misadventures of two nights earlier, sat at their usual table in front of the Café de la Natividad. Their position varied only with the weather or with those occasional ebullitions of the Eulalians which made it pleasanter to remain indoors. It was late Thursday afternoon. Mr. Riley, a whiskey-and-soda in one hand and a copy of *El Telegrafeo* in the other, was reading aloud. It was a pleasant time of day in Santa Eulalia, and Mr. Fergueson, who also had a whiskey-and-soda beside him and several others inside him, was tranquil enough in mind and body to be willing to listen.

'"Our beloved country,"' read Mr. Riley, '"has been treacherously attacked by an unscrupulous enemy at the moment when we were making every effort to bring about a peaceful settlement of the question under discussion. I need not tell a gathering of patriotic Eulalians that we are resolved under all circumstances to maintain those rights which are essential to the prosperity and dignity of our people. We have not sought peace, nor shall we do so, by submitting to insult and injustice. In such a course there is no lasting, no secure peace. We have endeavored to avoid war by strength as well as by moderation, believing it to be the duty of every nation to defend the principles of civilization whenever and wheresoever they are attacked."'

'I say,' broke in Mr. Fergueson, 'it has a familiar sound. I've heard or read it somewhere before.'

'If Cain had written the Bible, it would have been in the Book of Genesis,' answered Mr. Riley. '"To make it the more obvious that we had no intention of committing an aggression against a neighbor with whom we fondly hoped to remain at peace" — like hell they did! — "we withdrew our troops ten kilometres from the frontier. The response of the Republic of Nueva Tolosa to this gesture of good will was a sudden and unprovoked attack." He's beginning to repeat himself. I'd like to have been there. The old boy's rich. I didn't know he had it in him. "Our villages have been burned, our fields ravaged, our cattle driven off, our peaceful civilian population butchered and outraged, our officials brutally murdered without provocation. Faced by this unexpected assault, our troops have withdrawn toward Santa Clara, disputing heroically every inch of the way. In this grave emergency the government of Santa Eulalia is faced with two obligations of paramount importance. One is to lay its case in full confidence that the justice of its cause will be realized, before the bar of world opinion. That we have already taken steps to do."'

'That dirty little rat on *El Telegrafeo*,' commented Mr. Fergueson. 'The one Harris was running around with. The one with the pimples all over his face.'

'You know damned well he could have as many

pimples as there are fleas in that bloody hospital.' Here Mr. Riley pulled up the left leg of his trousers and scratched his bare calf animatedly. 'You wouldn't mind — you wouldn't even notice them if he'd say a good word now and then for the British Empire. The reason you're sore is Harris outbid you.'

'You're jolly fond of personalities,' returned Mr. Fergueson bitterly, but without trying to rise. 'I try to be pleasant and you spend your time picking quarrels.'

'This is a free country,' said Mr. Riley. 'There's no damned king here to tell me when I can pick quarrels and when I can't. However, if you can restrain your British propaganda for a minute or two, I'll go on. "'The other is to bring all our resources to bear to resist and punish this act of wanton aggression. The government has every confidence in the courage, the loyalty, and the devotion of its army, and in the unwavering and unanimous support of its people. Santa Eulalia will spare neither men nor money. The entire nation rises to bring to a victorious issue a war which will be fought in a holy cause. We shall fight for all we hold dear, for our firesides, our wives, our children, our honor, and for the cause of peace the world over."'

'Hypocrites,' muttered Mr. Fergueson. 'Damned hypocrites. They're fighting because they think they can get something out of it.'

Mr. Riley nodded ironic approval. 'I know. They ought to be ashamed of themselves. But we

can't all be noble and unselfish, like the English. "Loud and prolonged cheering from all sections of the House. At the conclusion of his speech, the president was given a veritable ovation in which the galleries joined enthusiastically. The resolution declaring war against Nueva Tolosa was then proposed by Senator Alvaro, of the Agrarian-Conservative bloc, seconded by Senator Juarez, of the Constitutional Socialists, and passed with but one dissenting vote. This was that of Professor Vargas, who holds the chair of philosophy at the University of Santa Eulalia and who was recently denounced by the President as one of the [quote] little group of wilful men [end quote] who had opposed the measures taken for the protection of the republic. The announcement of the results was greeted with another burst of popular enthusiasm and the presiding officer was obliged to threaten to clear the galleries if order was not at once restored. Professor Vargas left the House amid a storm of hisses and had it not been for the police protection afforded him might have been mobbed. It is stated that he will be asked to resign his professorship and that his book on Plato and Christ will be withdrawn from the university library as tending to promote sedition. After this incident the session was adjourned in order that preparations might be made for the emergency budget which will be voted to-morrow."'

'It all comes to a question of money with these people,' complained Mr. Fergueson.

'Well,' said Mr. Riley, 'as I said before, we can't

all be English. Some of us have to be sordid, just to keep the balance straight. What you want, Fergueson, is a nice, clean war, with no stealing and no atrocities, unless they help the British Empire.'

'You can sneer if you like,' retorted Mr. Fergueson, 'but it happens to be a fact that we English do try to keep war on a high plane. We hold up an ideal for people to follow.'

The conversation would certainly have gone on for some time, and might even have led to blows had not Mr. Harris at this moment appeared upon the scene. Mr. Harris had had a busy day and night. To begin with, he had held a long conference with the political editor of *El Telegrafeo*, first, as to the statement which the president should issue to the press of the world, and second, as to whether the important character of the editor's work did not justify a substantial increase in his subvention. The editor had intimated that there were a number of persons who did not take exactly his highness's view of Santa Eulalian affairs and who might be willing to offer more than Mr. Harris had been paying. Mr. Harris had replied that the president was in a position to make the editor very uncomfortable if he so desired. The editor had replied that he was willing to lay down his life for the freedom of the press.

The matter was finally adjusted to the mutual satisfaction of both negotiators by Mr. Harris raising the editor's salary from twenty-five to fifty dollars a week for the period of the war. Mr. Harris also arranged for the printing and distributing of

several hundred copies of the Santa Eulalian Purple Book, in which the diplomatic records of the dispute between Santa Eulalia and Nueva Tolosa were to be set forth. He proposed to read the proofs himself, so that no errors could creep in.

He then returned to his home, put his radio sending set in working order, and learned from the captain of the Lady Anne that the ship could not possibly dock before Saturday, the day after to-morrow. This news had given Mr. Harris food for thought. Much might happen before Saturday. On the other hand, it was pleasant to think that, until the munitions were actually put ashore, Mr. Harris would still be what he had dreamed himself — the master of the destinies of Santa Eulalia. Though still more than a little puzzled and worried, he began more and more to have his Napoleonic moments.

What puzzled and worried him most, to tell the truth, was not the affairs of the republic, nor even, strictly speaking, his own career. It was the same thing which had troubled Adam, Anthony, Abélard, and not a few other historical figures, as well as a considerable number not generally considered historical. It was woman in the abstract and Antonia in the concrete.

This charming domestic had brought him his breakfast as usual Thursday morning, and had made the discovery that though he was in the room his bed had not been slept in. She had shaken a mocking finger at him. 'Ah, naughty! Naughty!' said Antonia.

'Not naughty,' replied Mr. Harris in his limping Spanish, 'busy.'

Antonia put her hands on her hips, slanted her eyes provocatively at him, and trilled like a canary. 'Yes, I know — I know what caballeros do when they stay away all night.'

It was true that she did. She knew more about certain phases of life, both from hearsay and from personal experience, than Mr. Harris would ever know. She now danced up close to him. He felt himself menaced by an invisible danger without knowing quite how to avoid it.

'Was she,' demanded Antonia, 'more beautiful than I?'

Mr. Harris tried to be irritated. 'It wasn't a woman, Antonia,' he said. 'I had my work to do.'

At this Antonia's attitude suddenly changed. 'Poor Señor Harris!' she murmured, putting a maternal intonation into her voice. 'He works so hard. Look, you have dark circles under your eyes. You must not do so much work. I want you to stay well and strong, Señor Harris.'

What happened next was not entirely clear to Mr. Harris, though it may have been to Antonia. Apparently she placed her hand on his chest as she spoke. She may also have patted his cheek. In any case he suddenly found himself holding her very tightly in his arms and kissing her with extraordinary fervor. Her damp dark hair fell over her forehead, her eyes were closed, and she was making a kind of cooing sound, like a startled dove. Mr.

Harris wondered if she had ever been kissed before. Probably she had. These Latin races were hot-blooded. Then a thought came into his mind which both fascinated and frightened him.

He released Antonia, then took her gently by the arm, propelled her to the door, thrust her tenderly through, and closed it. Then he wiped his forehead. Why had this thing happened? Had he brought it about or had Antonia? Could this innocent child — no, he wouldn't think that. He heard soft laughter in the patio. Antonia dodged behind a banana tree on the other side of the fountain. Her laughter harmonized deliciously with the music of the falling water. Mr. Harris put on his hat and went hurriedly into the street. He was glad enough to have something to keep him busy.

Mr. Harris did not like Mr. Riley very well. He found him too irreverent in his attitude toward a number of things which Mr. Harris held sacred. The difference in religions was also a barrier. But Mr. Harris cultivated Mr. Riley because he realized that an American consul, in good standing at Washington, might be serviceable, and also because Mr. Riley obviously annoyed Mr. Fergueson.

Toward Mr. Fergueson Mr. Harris was positively antipathetic. As far as he could see there was no good reason whatever for the Englishman's opinions, personal appearance, or indeed, his very existence. But no matter what Santa Eulalia's three permanent Anglo-Saxon residents thought of one another, they were inevitably thrown together

by the Nordic qualities which they possessed in common, by their mother tongue, and by the fact that each, in his way, despised the Santa Eulalians.

When three men are thus associated day after day, it invariably happens that two of them are at any given moment in league against the third. Sometimes Mr. Harris and Mr. Fergueson picked on Mr. Riley because he was, of the three, temperamentally more like the natives. Mr. Riley, for instance, enjoyed a good time and was not ashamed of it afterwards — a feat of which neither Mr. Harris nor Mr. Fergueson was capable. Sometimes Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson nagged Mr. Harris because he was so energetic and ambitious, a regular Yankee, they said. Search Mr. Harris's pockets, said Mr. Riley, and one would find them full of wooden nutmegs. But most of the time Mr. Riley and Mr. Harris were allied against Mr. Fergueson because Mr. Fergueson represented the British Empire.

Mr. Riley talked about the wrongs of Ireland, and incidentally of the wrongs of India, South Africa, and such other British dependencies as he could think of. Mr. Harris indulged in reminiscences of the Revolutionary War and said that before many years the United States would inevitably annex Canada. Mr. Harris also said that the palm of empire was passing from England to the United States and that England was, as he saw it, decadent. Mr. Fergueson retorted that what Mr. Harris described as decadence was merely a culture which

America was as yet too barbarous to understand. Mr. Riley declared that America would sweep England from the seas in ten years, and that Ireland would help her do it. Mr. Fergueson said that England never had been beaten and never would be. Mr. Harris returned to the subject of the Revolutionary War and also mentioned the battle of New Orleans.

Such was the general tenor of the conversation of these three exiles during normal times. Between Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson it led to those periodical encounters from the effects of one of which both were now recovering. Mr. Harris's rage was of a colder sort. He would get up and go away, inwardly boiling but outwardly pale. Mr. Riley's opinion was that Mr. Harris did not drink enough.

There was one more element in the situation. Of late Mr. Harris had become convinced that Mr. Fergueson was engaged in some scheme inimical to his own plans and to his own career. Overtly, as a consul, Mr. Fergueson was not supposed to be allied for his own profit with private capitalistic interests. Yet Mr. Harris had, here and there, found his path blocked by a mysterious influence which seemed at times to have a British accent. Shortly after his arrival in Santa Eulalia, Mr. Harris had made a trip to Nueva Tolosa with the object of establishing certain business connections which seemed to him desirable. He had found the Tolosanos cold to the point of hostility. Mr. Fergueson had been in Nueva Tolosa not long before. He went there fre-

quently, for the shooting, he said. As there was little to shoot in Nueva Tolosa except small white-bellied monkeys, this was an explanation which did not explain. And, in short, an afternoon chat at the Café de la Natividad, with Mr. Fergueson, Mr. Riley, and Mr. Harris all sitting around the same table, was not without its elements of drama.

Mr. Harris sat down and wiped his ordinarily cool brow, a gesture which caused Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson to exchange curious glances.

'You've seen the paper, I suppose,' began Mr. Riley, after greetings had been exchanged.

Mr. Harris smiled dryly. He had. He had more than seen the paper, he had written or dictated the most important passages which had appeared in it.

'Is there any more news?' asked Mr. Fergueson. 'You seem to be on pretty intimate terms with his holiness, or whatever it is they call the president.'

'There will be,' answered Mr. Harris, looking owlishly at his watch, 'almost any minute now.'

'Our friends over the border are likely to make a little trouble, aren't they?' suggested Mr. Fergueson, looking very innocent.

'Your friends, you mean,' interpellated Mr. Riley. 'You know damned well that the Tolosano president is in the British pay. You know because you're the paymaster.'

Mr. Fergueson had his answer almost ready when a newsboy appeared in front of the café with a bundle of fresh copies of *El Telegrafeo*. A sudden rush of people swallowed him up. Mr. Riley dived into the

crowd and emerged with a crumpled sheet in his hand. Eulalian journalism had not yet learned to scream its important news in sixty-point type. Still, one did not have to look more than three times at *El Telegrafeo* on this particular Thursday evening to discover that something sensational had happened, nor more than four times to learn what this happening was. The top of the final two columns was headed with the single word, 'Victoria!'

'By God!' cried Mr. Riley. 'We're going to give 'em a run for their money. We've licked 'em, the dirty devils. We've got 'em on the run.'

Mr. Fergueson and Mr. Harris both stood up, Mr. Fergueson with a surprised and even disconcerted air, Mr. Harris with no perceptible change of expression.

'What does it say?' asked Mr. Harris.

'What does it say? Just listen to that crowd yelling and guess what it says. It says our fellows are showing the Tolosanos where they get off.'

'You can't tell as early as this,' grumbled Mr. Fergueson, reaching out a hand for the paper, which Mr. Riley refused to give him. 'These opening skirmishes don't mean anything.'

Mr. Riley, who loved to read aloud, began again to do so. 'This despatch,' he said, 'is dated from Santa Clara. That proves we've recaptured it. "The armies of the republic have again been victorious, driving back the insolent invader. Troops sent from the capital early this morning encountered the advance guard of the Tolosano forces near Santa

Clara shortly after noon. After a brief conflict, in which the soldiers of the republic fought with incredible heroism, the Tolosanos were pushed back. They are now believed to be retreating in disorder toward the frontier."'

'Believed!' snorted Mr. Fergueson.

'"They are reported to have suffered heavy losses,"' Mr. Riley concluded.

'An easy thing to say,' said Mr. Fergueson.

'That's all the news. But there's another presidential proclamation. The old boy certainly does know how to sling language. "Citizens of the republic,"' says he, '"your armies have chastised the treacherous enemies who dared to set foot upon the sacred soil of Santa Eulalia. We are sure of victory. But until the last invader has been cut down or driven out, we must not relax our efforts. We shall pursue the war relentlessly until we have won a just and lasting peace. The government counts upon every citizen to make all essential sacrifices in the interest of the common welfare, in the name of democracy, and in defense of those principles of righteousness without which civilization cannot endure." They're stealing your stuff, Fergueson. King George himself couldn't have been smugger.'

Mr. Harris threw himself between the two men. Mr. Fergueson subsided, muttering to himself.

'Exactly what do you suppose he means by that last sentence?' asked Mr. Riley, turning to Mr. Harris.

Mr. Harris was pleased, in spite of himself, to be

referred to as an authority. Besides, he really did know what the last sentence meant. 'That refers,' he said, 'to the draft bill and some of the financial measures. The government has decided to enroll all adult males, instead of picking up peons at random in the country districts. It is floating a loan, to which people will be urged to subscribe till it hurts. It is imposing taxes on incomes and also on all forms of luxuries and amusements. These bills will be announced to-morrow. The government wishes a favorable reception for them.'

'I see,' murmured Mr. Riley. 'The victory came in handy.'

Mr. Harris smiled cryptically. 'Yes, very handy.'

The people of Santa Eulalia were not, as Mr. Fergueson and Mr. Harris were never tired of saying, an industrious people. They would work for food, for drink, for clothes, for such simple pleasures as suited their habits and for a little money to gamble with. Beyond that point they could rarely be moved, except by brute force, and, as they had a certain amount of brute force of their own, this was not easy to accomplish.

But their lack of industry was not due to a lack of energy. They could exert themselves when they thought exertion worth while. They could dance the fandango all night, and when there was a Toro del Fuego, with its fireworks, its carrousels, its street shows, its gambling-booths, its parades, its shootings and stabbings, its love-making, its singing and carousing, they were a perfect volcano of ac-

tivity. If the volcano could only be harnessed, Mr. Harris used to think regretfully! It would be, some time, if he had his way. At any rate, harnessed or not, it existed.

Santa Eulalia had already had two wild nights, during which it had hardly slept at all. It had spent all of Tuesday night in wiping out the persons and property of such notorious Tolosanos as it could conveniently lay hands on. It had spent all of Wednesday night in celebrating the happy knowledge that it was about to pour out blood and treasure in the war which the president and Mr. Harris had been so thoughtful as to arrange for it. One might have thought it ready to sleep on Thursday night. But the festivities which began as Mr. Harris, Mr. Riley, and Mr. Fergueson sat in front of the Café de la Natividad discussing the news contained in the final edition of *El Telegrafeo* outdid not only the other two evenings, but any preceding evenings within the memory of man.

Perhaps the best way of explaining what Santa Clara night meant to Santa Eulalia — for it was as Santa Clara night that this famous occasion was remembered in history — would be to indicate its effect upon Mr. Harris. Mr. Harris was certainly not a demonstrative man. He was, in fact, a walking mass of inhibitions, some of them inherited, others acquired. He was the climax of a long line of hard-pressed ancestors, who had been laying by inhibitions exactly as they laid by old clothes, furniture, magazines, and miscellaneous knickknacks and

gewgaws in their expansive attics. But since Mr. Harris had not had time to study modern psychology, he did not know that he had inhibitions, nor did he even know precisely what an inhibition was. He merely considered himself virtuous. He believed in self-restraint, in moderation, in the golden mean. He never lived in the present moment. He was living, in imagination, in a handsome duplex apartment at the corner of Park Avenue and some street in the seventies. Normally he would never catch up with himself, and he would end by looking forward to a future for his children. What happened to Mr. Harris on Santa Clara night, therefore, was outside the usual range of possibilities. It was a prodigy, a *lusus naturae*, an act of God.

How it happened not even Mr. Harris ever knew. It seemed certain that for some time he and Mr. Riley and Mr Fergueson continued to sit in front of the Café de la Natividad. They drank, Mr. Harris quite moderately, as it seemed. They then had dinner. All this time a great deal was going on around them, including much that it is better not even to try to describe. The crowd kept pressing in around the tables. If love-making in Santa Eulalia was frank at all times and had been unabashed on Wednesday night, it was flagrant on Thursday night. The city seemed to be indulging not so much in a festival in honor of Mars as in a celebration of the indelicate goddess of love. A year later, sad to recount, the foundling asylums were overflowing with illegitimate babies.

Mr. Fergueson and Mr. Riley, after watching for some time whatever there was to see, and that was a good deal, became restless and expressed a desire to wander about. Mr. Harris was reluctant. He did not like crowds, even when they were well-behaved — indeed, one of the actuating motives of his career was his desire to ride in motor cars instead of subways, to be able to reserve a table instead of depending on the caprice of the head waiter, in short, always to have plenty of social and financial seclusion. But Mr. Harris was now not merely afraid of the crowd, he was beginning to be afraid of himself. He was beginning to be afraid that Santa Eulalia was, as Mr. Riley put it, getting him. Mr. Harris wanted to go back to his room. Yet when he thought of that he also thought of Antonia. Would Antonia be there or would she be out in the street somewhere, tearing around like the young wild animal she was with some of the youth of the city? Did he want to go home or didn't he? Did he want to find her there or didn't he? It seemed safer and easier to stay where he was, in front of the Café de la Natividad. But Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson were insistent and he went with them.

The regiments which had gone to the front had not taken their regimental bands with them, as the best military authorities in Santa Eulalia had wisely held that it was easier and cheaper to replace a common soldier than a competent musician. Several of these bands were now parading about the city, and one of them, stationed in the plaza in front

of the cathedral, was playing while the Eulalians danced the fandango. Even in ordinary times the Eulalian fandango was something worth going halfway round the world to see. It was danced with an abandon, a joyousness, a complete unconsciousness of anything but music and motion, that even an Anglo-Saxon could hardly resist. The plaza was full from the cathedral clear across to the ayuntamiento. The street lights around the borders burned brightly under the hardly less vivid stars, and there was a great flaring-up of torches. The dancing stopped only when the players on the brass instruments had to pause for breath, or when some one handed them up bottles of wine. Wine, in Santa Eulalia, was almost as necessary as breath, and almost as common and cheap. A dearth of wine would have killed half the population. Wine for the musicians, wine for the dancers, wine for the soldiers, wine of grapes and wine of life!

The whole crowd moved to the dance like animated drops of water in a sunny, wind-blown sea. Each individual seemed to be dancing alone, or dancing with eyes on one other individual opposite, whirling, cracking fingers in the air like castanets, with a certain fantastic earnestness under the gayety. They were not dancing for diversion only, as their Nordic neighbors might have been capable of doing. They did not dance rather than work, or play cards or rest. They danced as though the dance were the supreme purpose, the supreme expression of their lives. Here was the sea of Eula-

lian existence at its flood tide. It rose like lovely shattered foam and broke in audacious joy against the bleak walls of fate. What though boys and girls grew old and quarreled and fell grotesquely ill and died, what though soldiers went to battle and came back no more? It did not matter. Santa Eulalia danced. It danced under the illusion of immortality. The night and the music would go on forever. Or rather there would be no forever, no bleak uncertain to-morrow, nothing but the sure instant now glowing and singing before all eyes and ears. That was how Santa Eulalia danced the fandango in the plaza on Santa Clara night.

Mr. Riley was the first to yield. The other two saw him for some time capering on the edge of the mob, trying first one step and then another until he found one that rhymed with the universal motion. Mr. Fergueson watched him in alcoholic disgust. 'He ought not to do that,' he grumbled. 'The only way to get along with these people is to make them respect you. As soon as you take up their ways and they begin to think they're as good as a white man, you'd as well pack up and go home.' Mr. Fergueson had been in India and in China, and he knew. But it was not long before Mr. Harris noticed that even Mr. Fergueson's feet were keeping time to the lively strings and brasses.

The Englishman himself seemed as surprised as any one at this strange phenomenon, the influence of which seemed to mount from his feet to his knees, from his knees to his waist, from his waist to his

arms and shoulders, until at last it reached his cool Britannic brain.

'If,' he snorted contemptuously, 'if a dirty Irishman can dance the fandango, an Englishman can do it and do it better.'

Whether he did it better or not was hard for Mr. Harris to decide, but he did do it immediately and with a vast expenditure of energy. He whooped. He threw off his hat. He surprised and delighted all who knew him.

Mr. Harris was left alone, or so at first he thought. But his perceptive apparatus, whether because of the last drink or two he had had before he left the Café de la Natividad, or because of one or two other drinks which he had thoughtlessly taken from the bottles which were being handed promiscuously around, was no longer vivid or reliable. The lights blurred, the dancers became a moving, luminous carpet which some giant was shaking in the night wind. Somebody slipped a warm soft hand through his arm, a moist, luscious hand. Two extraordinarily brilliant eyes looked into his.

'Ah, Señor Harris,' said Antonia's voice, 'you, too, dance the fandango. You are not busy any longer?'

Mr. Harris knew that a crisis had been reached — a crisis unparalleled in the whole history not only of himself but of his family as far back as the middle of the seventeenth century, when the first Harrises had landed in Massachusetts. If he could get home immediately and put a chair against the door, he

could perhaps keep out this maddening invasion of the spirit of Santa Eulalia until something like sanity returned to the city and to himself. Otherwise — well, otherwise. He could hardly define what he meant by otherwise. Antonia could have defined it for him had she thought it necessary. But Antonia was trusting to her eyes and her glowing fevered flesh.

Mr. Harris wavered like an autumn leaf in the wind. His lips were no longer tightly compressed. His face was no longer pale. He was no longer recognizably Mr. Harris at all, he was a faun in Mr. Harris's clothing. He was forgetting the war, he was forgetting the munitions ship, he was even forgetting his career. He could think of nothing but Antonia.

'But' — he made one last protest — 'I can't dance the fandango.'

'It is easy,' Antonia brightly assured him. 'It is not knowing how that you need. It is wanting to dance that makes you know how to dance. I will teach you. When I dance you will want to dance, too.'

She placed herself opposite him. 'Now!' she cried.

The music soared heavenward and caught up Mr. Harris with it. He danced. Antonia was always just opposite him, her lithe figure swaying, her arms uplifted, her lips fixed as though she were about to whistle or to kiss. Sometimes they joined hands and ran wildly about in a circle. Then the circle dissolved again into couples.

Mr. Harris wanted to touch Antonia. She kept just out of his reach, always dancing, always luring him on. He plunged headlong through the throng after her. Some made way for him and some thrust out jovial feet to trip him. But Mr. Harris was past minding. He had abandoned himself to the wild influences of the night. He gave way — like Mr. Fergueson and Mr. Riley, like almost every one except the canon and one or two others too narrowly occupied with their own affairs — to this blessed sanity of madness. He became at one with the universe. He pulsed with suns and fireflies, with atoms and trees and flowers and comets.

VIII

THERE was more than one kind of madness abroad in Santa Eulalia on Santa Clara night. There was the madness that seized upon Vitoria Soberanes. It was not the madness of joy. It was the frantic madness of one who must either go mad or die.

The president had not been grossly menacing in the note which he had sent her on Wednesday. His letters, when they were of a social nature, often had a surprising delicacy about them. This was because they were usually revised by a confidential young secretary with some experience in matters of the heart. This charming creature hoped some day to be the president's favorite mistress. Pending this happy outcome, she proved her devotion in the most unselfish manner by helping him make love to other women.

The letter to Vitoria invited her to attend a small dinner party at the presidential palace on Friday evening. One or two other persons would be there. The president would send a car for her. His highness added that he had been glad to give personal attention to Vitoria's request concerning Señor Gomez. He added, again, almost in an apologetic tone, that it might be better for every one concerned, in view of the delicate nature of the situation, if Señorita Soberanes would not see Señor Gomez for the present. Señorita Soberanes might communicate with Señor Gomez through the messenger

whom the president was now sending. The messenger would await her convenience.

For Vitoria the words did not hide the obscene farce behind them. She saw this fat beast reaching out for her greedily, thrusting Rafael aside if that were enough, killing him without scruple if he stood in the way. The president was power, he was government. Government took money when it needed it, took men, took life. Why should it be expected not to take women, too, when it desired them? Such reasoning came naturally to Vitoria as it would have done to any Eulalian.

It left her but one choice, the choice which she had been trying to avoid ever since General Hernandez had broken into the charmed circle of her own and Rafael's paradise. She must choose between Rafael's life and his love. She must betray the one or the other. But this was not the sole cause of her agony. When she looked into her own heart, she looked into a bottomless well of tragedy. For there she saw — she could not at this moment of blazingly brilliant vision deny it — a savage pride that she, Vitoria Soberanes, ripening suddenly into beauty that men desired, should have brought three males, two of them able to pick and choose among the loveliest women of the republic, to the point of killing or dying for her. It was hideous, this pride, yet underneath her hatred for the president and for Hernandez, underneath her love for Rafael, it was there, it was there. She could not ignore it, she could not cover it up.

If she had not found this sinister thing in her own consciousness, she might even then have torn up the president's note, thrown the bits in the messenger's face, and gone to Rafael to defy the world and die in his arms. But now she knew she did not want to die, did not want to destroy this beauty that was hers. She wanted to live, to be envied, to be desired. It was Rafael she loved, and yet she loved, too, the stir of admiration of which she was always conscious when she went into a ballroom or passed along a crowded street. She could not, she could not give it up — could not give up the sun and wind in her face, the throb of life in her veins. Yet even this might have been a passing mood. Even then she might have steeled herself had it not suddenly occurred to her that what she knew of herself might also be true of Rafael. Did not he, also, love life? Would he not, in spite of himself, in spite of his love for her, reproach her if she brought him to his death? Would there not be one terrible last moment when each would see clearly at what a price their love had been bought, and each would hate the other?

She thought of her oak, her meadow, of their dear hours together. If she could lie there upon the brown grass, in the sun, for a long afternoon, the old enchantment might return. But now this madness, this madness of clear-seeing, this contagion which had crept out like a miasma from the rotting cesspools of Santa Eulalia, this obscene vision of horrific realities, was too strong for her.

She bowed before it shuddering. She became a

part of it. She became, in short, what most persons in Santa Eulalia would have called a sensible, practical woman.

She wrote a note to the president saying that she would be happy to attend at the executive mansion on Friday evening. She wrote a note to Rafael, saying that he must not see her any more.

She did not weep at all. Neither her mother, a pallid, ineffectual wisp of a woman, who seemed always to avoid the sun, nor her father, who possessed the complacency and obtuseness of a healthy bovine temperament, noticed that she had changed. She spoke to both of them of the president's invitation, as in duty bound by Eulalian custom, without a tremor in her voice. Only Dolores, who had nursed her in her infancy and childhood, before she went away to the convent school at Avila, knew that something had happened, and it was not Dolores's custom to discuss knowledge of this kind. She merely became more solicitous, insisting that her young mistress eat more, and preparing special foods to tempt her appetite. Vitoria ate obediently, hardly noticing what.

She was not so much unhappy as dazed. The world drew away and became vague. She lived the round of her life for twenty-four hours like an automaton. She sewed a little, played the piano a little, amused herself by helping Dolores in the kitchen. Only once did a violent emotion manifest itself. Her father spoke, as they sat at dinner, of the value of the presidential favor to his own prospects. He had

saved out of the yields of his vineyards, and had made investments here and there. If the president said the word, he could dabble profitably in government contracts. Vitoria silenced him with a glance so fierce that he nearly dropped his knife and fork.

'If I sell myself,' she said with chilly distinctness, 'it will not be to line your pockets with dirty pesos.'

He tried to hide his confusion by blustering. 'There has been no talk of your selling yourself. Has the time come when a daughter of mine cannot accept a compliment from the president of the republic without shame?'

Vitoria had risen, her head held high. 'I did not say I was ashamed. I should be ashamed only if I sold myself too cheaply. What I give shall be paid for, but not in pesos.'

She flung out of the house, but she did not go to her oak, to her spot of meadow. She went up into the vineyard, and sat in the starlit gloom, plucking and eating grapes as she had done long ago in the years of her childhood. She had always been lonely, always until Rafael came. Now she knew that it was the destiny of every person born into the world to be lonely.

She saw the lights of the city, glowing against the black-purple sky. She even heard the echoes of the shouting and singing. This was Wednesday, at the day and the hour at which they were to have met again. But she made no move to go across the vineyard, up the white and dusty road, like a ribbon in the starlight, to her enchanted oak. That spot was

a grave, and worse than a grave. He would not come, he would not come.

By this time he would have read her letter. Had he understood the terror of the choice she had to make? Probably not — that was part of the price she had to pay. She could save him only by losing him, by making him hate her. Perhaps in time she could learn to hate him. If he would only insult her, strike her in the face, call her a vile name, then she would hate him. Yet he must not, he must not die. She could hate him, but she could never hate him enough to want him out of the world. Perhaps he would be killed in battle. Yet she did not think he would be. If she paid God His price, God, like the shrewd tradesman that He was, would keep His part of the bargain. For if God did not sell His goods, even as Vitoria sold hers, at an honest price, then people would stop praying, and then what would be the use of being God?

The shell of Rafael would survive. The soul might not, any more than hers would. The universe was curiously empty. She went home and slept. Why should she not sleep? People are kept awake by hope or by fear. Vitoria at this moment had neither hope nor fear.

She slept and woke. Thursday morning. Another day began its slow methodical march across the sky. For Vitoria time did not seem to move at all. There was no time, for one moment was exactly like another.

Toward evening her father returned from the city

with the news of the great victory of Santa Clara. Even as he jogged in at the gate of the corral on the gray mare which he habitually used for these short excursions, Vitoria heard the celebration beginning. The great bell of the cathedral was ringing and all the other bells were joining in. Occasionally there were explosions — the valetudinarian gunners at the Presidio were firing salutes. But the awesome thing was the general voice of Santa Eulalia. Santa Eulalia was singing and dancing. There was no mistaking that inference if one were near enough to hear the bells and see the flare of lights and the fireworks as they shot up against the sky.

For the first time since she had sent her message to Rafael, Vitoria felt her pulses quicken. The city became a live thing, beckoning. It had no duties and no conscience; it dreamed no dreams, but it lived, with all the strength of its great madness it lived. And, Vitoria thought, it was for this thing that the city stood for that she had sold herself. Though she had lost fear and hope perhaps she might still have ecstasy, bodily ecstasy if no other.

She would go to Santa Eulalia on this night, being a new Vitoria, as she had gone to her oak on those many other nights when she was still the old Vitoria. If there could no longer be any magic in the oak there might be a new kind of magic in the dancing lights and the singing and the crowds. She turned toward the city, going by smooth and dustless by-paths among the vineyards. The city reached out invisible arms in the darkness and drew her in. She

was mad now — mad, mad, mad. Or suddenly she had become sane. But, though the words to describe the experience were difficult to find, the experience itself seemed, as it swallowed her up, luridly inevitable. It was the law of life. She was caught up into the dance with which all Santa Eulalia vibrated, the dance of joy, the dance of Venus, the dance that for a night made mockery of despair.

No one danced alone that night in Santa Eulalia. Vitoria found herself in groups which grew, dissolved, re-formed themselves continuously. The touch of many hands, the contact of many bodies, the mingling of many voices. Social distinctions were forgotten, the good and the evil, the respectable and the disreputable, the washed and the unwashed, danced together, drank together, sang together, even made love mutually.

A man caught Vitoria about the shoulders and kissed her violently — a boy, rather, with a handsome smooth-shaven face and burning reckless eyes. She felt no shock and no resentment. The kiss was like the wine, the lights, and the music, a part of the occasion. Her body did not hate his as she knew it would hate the president's. He took her by the hand. They made their way slowly out of the resounding plaza toward quieter places. Once she forgot and called this stranger, this boy whom she had never seen before and would never see again, by the name of Rafael. Her laughter surprised him not a little, for he was a youth of great sobriety and abstemious habits, who consequently knew little

about women. The bells kept ringing and the rockets went up at intervals; the cannons boomed and the shouting and singing never died down.

Two molecules clinging together for a moment in the whirl and dance of a wild universe. For Vitoria there was no wickedness as there was no lasting meaning to it. It was, for the instant, a refuge from desperation. It was included in the bargain Vitoria had made with God the great Merchant.

Thus Santa Clara night had its will with Mr. Riley, Mr. Fergueson, Mr. Harris, and Vitoria, as it had with many another human unit, each the center of some universe. Only one deliberate, cold-blooded purpose manifested itself throughout the night. The government of Santa Eulalia, like other governments, had, after the manner of its species, a habit of looking after its own interests, even in times of violent excitement. As the night wore on, soldiers with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets were going about the city in small groups, picking up male stragglers in various stages of intoxication and debility, and marching them off without ceremony to the railway station. At the station the recruits were shoved into box cars, thirty-five or forty men to a car, and the doors were securely locked upon them. Thus the citizenry of Santa Eulalia, as the president himself had so eloquently put it, were not only encouraged to volunteer en masse, but were protected against giving way to that grayest of human weaknesses, the sober second thought.

Toward morning the recruiting squads were

drunk enough to be democratically indiscriminate in their operations. They came upon Vitoria and her companion as the two walked slowly across the plaza an hour before dawn. He knelt in the dust and kissed her hand, and she read the doom in his dark eyes. She never saw him, scarcely even thought of him again, never knew that twelve hours later he was lying dead in front of the pass of San Gregorio, with a Tolosano bullet in his passionate heart. She took the road home, in the darkness, alone and unafraid. She would always be alone henceforth, she thought, just as she had been, even during that night, alone — alone and unafraid.

At about the same time Mr. Harris, too, must have been turning homeward, escaping because of his light complexion and other Nordic traits the unwelcome attentions of the recruiting squads. He may have been kicked a few times by disappointed sergeants, he was not sure. In fact, he remembered very little except that the next morning he found himself safely and snugly in bed in his own room. However, Antonia on this particular morning, which was Friday, did not immediately bring him his breakfast. The reason was that she lay beside him, her left arm thrown carelessly across his breast, her right hand opened in a bewitchingly graceful way upon her own slowly rising and falling bosom, her red lips parted a little, her whole expression one of childish, almost angelic innocence. Mr. Harris looked at her, first in pleasure, then in swift terror. She opened her eyes and smiled.

Everything was now quiet outside, except for the occasional tramp of feet and rattle of equipment. The government was still combing the city for men. It needed them. The victory of Santa Clara had been one of Mr. Harris's little exaggerations, which the editor of *El Telegrafeo* had taken somewhat more seriously than Mr. Harris had intended. The celebration, enjoyable as it had been, was at best premature. The flower of the Santa Eulalian army had encountered the enemy west of Santa Clara, and was at that very moment retreating precipitously toward the capital, broken and mutinous.

IX

THE Santa Eulalian army had rolled out of its capital city early Thursday morning in what was on the whole a jovial mood. It traveled in several trains, made up partly of flatcars and partly of box cars, the latter being intended for the less enthusiastic members of the expedition. At the rear of each train was a passenger coach for the officers, and at the rear of the last train was a luxurious private car in which rode General Hernandez and his staff. There had been a time, not many years earlier, when Eulalian armies had gone into battle in the inverse order, but even Santa Eulalia, uncivilized as it was in comparison with European standards, had now discovered that humane principle of modern warfare which dictates that those who cause and direct wars shall run as little chance as possible of being killed in them.

Rafael, riding in the general's car, was experiencing the abject loneliness of the civilian thrown abruptly into a military environment. Domingo could have told him that it was not so much the knowledge as the stupidity necessary to the good soldier that he lacked. But Domingo was not there.

Presently Rafael made the discovery that the round-faced young major sitting next him was the same who had been sent by General Hernandez to the shoemaker's house two nights before.

'Ah!' said this young man, 'you have taken up the military life, Señor Gomez?'

'So I am told.' Rafael smiled lugubriously. 'As you see, it is still strange to me.'

'That will soon pass. You have only to learn a few words and gestures. You whistle to a dog, he comes. You tell him to go away and if necessary kick him, and he goes away. You throw a stick, and he goes and gets it. You let him loose in the patio at night, and if any one climbs the wall he barks and perhaps bites as well. Soldiering is just as simple. It is for that reason that I love it — that and the fact that in war a man does not have to wait for those who stand in the line of his promotion to die a natural death.'

He continued in this amiable fashion while the train passed the outskirts of the city, crossed a little plain to the east, and entered upon the winding defile among brown hills which led to the greater plain. A clear stream slid almost noiselessly among the rocks. There was grateful coolness in the shadows. Rafael wondered what would happen if he slipped quietly off the train, dropped down over rocks and gravel, and lay on the green grass, among the slim cottonwood trees beside the water. Lay and let all the madness go by with a rush of steam and grinding of wheels. Lay and tried to remember Vitoria. The Vitoria who had been, who was no more. But he did not move. He was drifting with a tide flowing irresistibly in the direction of battle. A sinister force that was not entirely discipline drew him on

as it did hundreds of others. The fascination of the serpent's eyes. The knowledge that something tremendous was happening, or about to happen. A childish curiosity. A sense of fate and doom. A profound relief in being at last no longer the master of one's own destinies.

Every one was talking at once. Rafael found himself part of an excited group examining a map. In the cars ahead the soldiers were singing, not, however, the national anthem of Santa Eulalia, but some bawdy street song. They sang it over and over and began another of the same character. The unpublishable songs of Santa Eulalia were numerous as well as tuneful. There was plenty of wine and stronger liquor. People were urging Rafael to drink, and he did. In the remote distance there were the sounds of an automobile in bad repair struggling up a steep grade.

The major nodded toward General Hernandez, who sat with two other members of the high command in a small room partitioned off from the rest of the car. The door, half open, swung to and fro on its hinges with the movements of the train, but none of the three, intent upon some profound discussion, paid any attention to it.

'Our next president,' said the major.

'There could be a worse,' returned Rafael, thinking of the incumbent president.

His face assumed an expression which caused the major to add hastily: 'But it was not of politics that I was thinking. Since our general wishes to become

president, it will be necessary for him to win a victory. If he can kill a thousand Tolosanos while the Tolosanos are killing only nine hundred and ninety-nine of us, he will be a great man. If, on the other hand, one thousand of us are killed and only nine hundred and ninety-nine of the Tolosanos, he will be disgraced. In either case there will be much killing. I am glad I have my crucifix to keep me from harm.'

The defile opened and by leaning from the windows they could gaze across the filmy plains toward the lofty mountains, sometimes buried in snow, which formed the main dividing line between Santa Eulalia and Nueva Tolosa. But at one point, by some historical misadventure, Nueva Tolosa spilled over the mountains for a few square miles and the boundary followed the course of a little river called the Guadarita. It was these square miles that the president of Santa Eulalia, following the advice of Mr. Harris, had demanded as a gage of honor. They contained something besides honor. They contained oil.

This bit of Eulalia Irredenta was now almost within sight of the soldiers on the advancing troop trains. But the village of Santa Clara happened to be somewhat nearer, and the village of Santa Clara was in the hands of the enemy. The arsenal of Monte Rio, north of Santa Clara, was also, at this very moment, falling into the clutches of the Tolosanos. The asthmatic automobile which Rafael and the others had heard was in fact the echo of the last

resistance of Monte Rio. The garrison had put up a strenuous battle, partly out of devotion to duty, and partly because it expected to be, and was, bayoneted to the last man as the Tolosanos swarmed over the walls. The killing of prisoners was a regrettably barbaric practice in almost all serious warfare in this out-of-the-way corner of the world. It was the more deplorable because the Eulalians and the Tolosanos, unlike the more cultured nations of North America and Europe, never bothered to invent military reasons to justify it. They did it because they rather enjoyed it.

'They say,' remarked the major to Rafael, 'that he means to be the Mussolini of Santa Eulalia. You know — tell us all what to do, make everybody he doesn't like drink castor oil, make everybody wear a black shirt.'

The train halted. Several officers climbed to the roof of the car and scanned the horizon through field glasses. The other trains were strung ahead across the prairie. The engines got under way again, with a great spinning of driving wheels and a violent puffing. The smoke rose high in delicate blue columns.

'Now, if they had artillery,' said Rafael's friend, 'they would blow us off the track. But they're a stupid lot.'

The expedition continued to advance. The track mounted a slight grade, a swell in the great tranquil plain, and new areas opened out. Rafael was riding on the roof of the coach now. The major handed

him his field glasses. A sound like a huge bee flying at tremendous speed. It grew louder. The first train was several hundred yards ahead. Rafael, a moment later, was glad it was, for the bee, as he looked through the glasses, seemed to have dropped straight into the bulging lip of the great smokestack — a dark flower in which it sought a strange honey.

There were two distinct explosions, one small and precise, one expansive and vague. The smokestack rose vertically. Rafael had time to notice that the remaining part of the locomotive looked absurdly sleek with the stack gone. It reminded him of a drowned kitten. Then, with the second explosion, the rest of the locomotive dissolved into a cloud of dust and steam. There were dark objects in the cloud — the engineer and fireman, no doubt. The front two cars also went to pieces. One instant Rafael saw them crowded with men, petrified in whatever attitudes they had been in when the great bee stung. The next instant they were scattered. There were dark objects on both sides of the wreck, some of them quiet, some of them wriggling like worms.

'They did have artillery,' said the major, taking the glasses from Rafael's shaking hand and putting them carefully away. He rolled a cigarette with steady fingers. Then he stopped to listen. 'One gun,' he observed. 'If they had others, they'd have wiped us out.'

He swore because the cigarette which he had not lighted would not burn. Then he spun swiftly round

and dropped his legs over the side. There were no more sounds from the direction of Nueva Tolosa. There was — which was harder to endure — an ominous silence. Men were pouring out of the cars like ants out of a hill that has been poked with a stick. They came out of doors, out of windows, with a sound of shattered glass. Once on the ground they ran, paying no attention to the shouting of their officers. The sandy slopes a few hundred feet on each side of the track were black with them in an instant. A second bee arrived, but this time, instead of hitting where the first locomotive had been, it fell farther along and at the side of the second train. A cloud of dust ascended. Nothing else happened.

'The damned fools have lost the range,' remarked the major.

He was standing by Rafael's side at some distance from the track. Rafael could not remember just how they had got there. The runaway soldiers, their first panic over, were straggling back. Some were trying to get the horses out. Some one blundered in the way of a flying hoof and there was a great roar of laughter. A squad of machine-gunners were squatted beside the right of way, making a desperate attempt to get their weapon in order. They fired a few rounds and their gun jammed. To Rafael everything seemed in hopeless confusion. He saw his friend the major trying to force a group of men into something like military formation. Some were crawling back into the cars to get their rifles, which they had forgotten to carry along in

their hurried exit. Rafael, seeing nothing else to do, sat down on the steps of the passenger car, feeling very small and absurd. Companies and regiments were beginning to take shape. The Tolosano bees had ceased their humming. The Tolosanos, so the major had told Rafael, were thought to have an English artillery officer. They really had, a promising young survivor of the World War who had been highly recommended by Mr. Fergueson. Evidently, however, he had not had time to train his crew to handle the gun properly.

So far there had been no visible sign of the enemy, other than the two shells. The Eulalians could see the Tolosano mountains in the distance. They could also see, through their glasses, the roof and square towers of the church of Santa Clara. The inequalities of the ground prevented their being certain of what lay between. The plain rolled, brown, sandy, dotted with mesquite, cut by little ravines in which during the rainy season there were swift streams. One was not aware of these ravines in the distance, though they were important from the military point of view. The slopes seemed to move as smoothly as a glassy sea, up to the mountains, over to funereal buttes and mesas.

But the Tolosanos did not intend to remain invisible. They had ranged their gun on the column of smoke from the leading engine, but fighting at long range did not suit their fantastic temperaments at all. They were ugly, sullen, and vindictive. They were also convinced, as General Hernandez had pre-

dicted, that they were invincible. Presently they came loping into sight in a great dust, a huddle of cavalry on either wing.

The Eulalians were not wholly prepared to receive them, for the detachments on the second and third trains had not yet joined those on the first. Bullets began to drop. The Eulalians drew off by companies to the right and left of the track, and began to fire in return. Men got hit. Rafael lay prone in the midst of a group of barefooted soldiers. He seized a rifle from the man nearest and began to aim and fire. Fifty yards away a Tolosano stood up, shouted, fell kicking on his face. Rafael experienced a savage delight. Men died around him in humorous grotesque ways. The Tolosanos, meeting with more resistance than they had expected, had slowed down in the center and the cavalry were coming around on the flanks. Rafael fired at a horseman. Did the man waver in the saddle? He didn't know. The cavalry halted, swung back again. The Eulalians were standing up now, yelling and shouting. The enemy were drawing off.

Rafael found the major still by his side. 'Is the battle over?' he asked innocently. 'Have we beaten them?'

The major wiped the sweat from his forehead with his shirt sleeve. He laughed. 'Battle? What battle? There hasn't been any battle. They were just making a reconnaissance.'

There was a breathing space. An effort was being made to bandage the wounded and get them into

the shelter of the cars. Men who had been insane with rage and terror a few moments ago were beginning to laugh and joke among themselves.

A familiar figure was striding forward, rifle in hand, sombrero pulled down jauntily over one eye. Domingo! Domingo, nonchalant, as thoroughly at home as though he were back in his shop in Santa Eulalia soling a shoe. He recognized Rafael and came toward him smiling.

'I had counted on giving you your first lessons in soldiering myself,' he said, 'but I see that some one has been ahead of me. But that does not matter. Perhaps you have not learned all there is to learn. The first thing is that what happens to you is of no particular importance, except to yourself. The second is that the enemy is at least as much afraid of you as you are of him. The third ——'

'Ah, Domingo, amigo mio!' Rafael took him by both hands, and felt the tears coming into his eyes. 'The same wise Domingo. You are more welcome than any one in the world.'

'So!' Domingo eyed him closely. 'You would not have said the same thing two days ago. Nor one day ago.'

Rafael made a wry face. 'Do not speak of women, my good Domingo. I am through with women, except as I can use them and forget them.'

'You begin to grow wise at last. The war has done you good. However, it is necessary to speak of women, after a fashion, if I am to explain how and why I am here. When you saw me last, Rafaelito, I was,

if you remember, in the company of a woman. That woman was, though it breaks my heart to confess it, a person of no virtue. You will remember that she seemed to go with me reluctantly at first because, as she said, she preferred you. By degrees she became more friendly, then very friendly, then so friendly that even had I been otherwise disposed it was no more than my duty as a gentleman and a former soldier to oblige her. And what is the result? I wake up at dawn with a headache. She is gone. My money is gone. My coat is gone. Even my shoes are gone. I go out into the street in search of her. I meet a squad of soldiers. They tell me I am about to volunteer to defend my country against the Tolosanos. I tell them I am willing in my own good time, but not at that moment. They point out to me that there is no time like the present. One of them has an argument to which I cannot think up a good answer. He hits me on the head with the butt of his rifle.'

Domingo took off his hat and showed a discolored spot on his forehead.

'I agree that there is nothing more to say, and, in short, behold me, once more a soldier. At the station I take some recruits in hand to make them understand the duties of an infantryman. My activities are called to the attention of an officer, who immediately promotes me to be, first, a corporal, and then, because he laughed at something I said to him, a sergeant. I ride out in a stinking, lousy box car with forty dirty blackguards from the water-

front brothels, and here I am. But mark you I could have escaped on the way out if I had cared to do so. I am here as a volunteer, my dear Rafael, and I am now ready to advise you in the art of war. Indeed, if you had not been here I should not have come.'

'You were badly needed,' said Rafael.

'And what is your news, Rafaelito?'

Rafael told him. He was a major with no one to command, a pawn of no especial importance in the game which the general, the president, the canon, and Mr. Harris were playing.

'Do not underrate yourself,' returned Domingo. 'You are in a position to gain a great deal because you have nothing to lose. You have no fortune, you have no office, you have no woman. You think — though you are mistaken — that you would not mind being killed. You are in a bad enough temper to be willing to kill some one else. In short, Rafaelito, wars were invented for such as you.'

The troops were being deployed across the track, on a line with the wrecked cars. Several more machine guns were brought up, though, because they were of an old pattern and likely to jam, they had little more than moral value. General Hernandez's relatives had done well in the army contracts. The only trouble was that their goods, intended chiefly for peace-time uses, were not always of the best quality.

The general had taken some pains to see that the cargo of the Lady Anne, with which he had counted

on winning victories, was new and usable. But because of the unfortunate haste with which the Tolosanos had acted he could not at this critical moment lay hands on the cargo of the Lady Anne. The army was suffering from another difficulty. When the trains started, it had been expected that they would reach the watering tanks three miles west of Santa Clara. This hope had been frustrated, the nearest fresh supply of water was in the hills five miles back, and there was very little in the cars.

'It is oversights like that,' commented Domingo, 'that lose battles. Men begin to suspect that the officers are not gods, and then there is likely to be trouble.'

General Hernandez, as fresh and almost as neat as ever, despite his long dusty ride, was walking along the front of his ragged lines. Every one else was in shirt sleeves. Hernandez wore a military tunic buttoned to the throat, a polished leather belt encircled his trim waist, his boots seemed to have been newly cleaned.

'Just out of the hands of his dressmaker,' growled Domingo, under his breath.

A few sharp commands ran up and down the lines. Santa Eulalia's defenders came to attention — or as close to it as any Eulalian army ever came. The general halted. Domingo spoke softly into Rafael's ear. 'He will make a speech telling us to go forward and die like heroes. Then he will return to the rear and live like a general.' The two had slipped behind one of the paraded companies. No one seemed to

pay any attention. Rafael wondered what it was that held the army together.

Everything was quiet, except when one of the machine guns fired a few bursts and suddenly stopped. The young Englishman, Mr. Fergueson's protégé, had not yet got his artillery back into working order.

The general cleared his throat. 'Soldiers of Santa Eulalia!' he began. His voice carried well. He was perfectly composed. 'Soldiers of Santa Eulalia, one of the greatest honors that can be bestowed upon a soldier is the privilege of dying for his country. Some of you are now to enjoy this privilege and this honor. We are fighting in a righteous cause with our backs against the wall. Santa Eulalians never fight more courageously than under such conditions. Your countrymen count upon you to do your duty as citizens and soldiers. Your sacrifices to-day will be long remembered. You have just repulsed a determined attack of the enemy. You have inflicted heavy losses upon him. He has burned your fields and your villages, butchered your fathers and brothers, violated your sweethearts, mothers, and sisters, cut off the hands of little children. You now stand upon the front line between civilization and barbarism. We are about to attack. Go forward, take the revenge which is due you, and bring us back victory.'

An officer stepped quickly forward, waving his cap. 'Viva!' he cried. 'Viva el generalisimo! Viva Santa Eulalia! Viva la libertad!'

Rafael heard Domingo's voice in the cheering which followed. He turned surprisedly. Domingo grinned. 'Viva el toro!' the old sergeant whispered. 'Viva el toreador! It is a part of the play. We must not forget our pretty speeches, nor our exits. The general is quite right. We must not laugh at him, no matter how foolish his words sound. Wars would be impossible without such words, spoken by some one or at least published in the newspapers, and if there were not wars what would become of us soldiers?'

The general acknowledged the cheering, then walked round the end of the line and back toward his quarters in the rear car of the last train. Suddenly a voice came up out of the ranks. 'Let him die, too, if it is such an honor!' Somebody caught the sentence up. 'No, his women are waiting for him.' There was loud laughter. The general's love of feminine beauty was notorious.

The general halted, cold, implacable. He motioned to the colonel at his side and pointed, seemingly at random. 'Bring that man out!' The ranks fell apart a little. A soldier, a boy, beardless, white under the tan, was dragged forward. 'Now shoot him!'

The thing was incredible, yet it happened. The boy stood wavering in the sunlight, dazed, almost uncomprehending, against a convenient bank of sand. It was over in five minutes. Six rifle shots rang out together. The boy fell forward on his face. A lieutenant ran forward and fired a revolver into

his head. The general paused a moment more. Then he quietly turned his back and resumed his march.

'God!' murmured Domingo, in a tone not lacking in admiration. 'What a man it is! He will rule Santa Eulalia or he will get himself killed. There are no halfway measures for him.'

'It was murder.' Rafael felt as he had done when he saw the mob kill the Tolosano baker.

'No,' continued Domingo. 'You do not understand the art of war, the trade of controlling troops. If he had not done exactly what he did do, instantly, they would have fired on him. Nine out of ten men here will do what they are told. If they are told to die gloriously, they will do so. If they are told to mutiny, they will do that, also. And that is what some one has been telling them. This thing has gone farther than I thought.'

The tension had relaxed as swiftly as it had formed. The bloody head on the sand moved no more. Men began to talk in natural tones. Two young fellows were bragging about their exploits in the houses of ill fame along the water-front at Santa Eulalia. A man a few feet away broke in with an incredibly obscene joke. 'I'll take you there some time,' said the first voice. 'You can see for yourself.' A man yawned loudly. 'No sleep last night, none the night before that.' Domingo swung round. 'You'll sleep well and long to-night, amigo mio.' Somebody began to sing, 'Las Hijas de Sevilla.' It was taken up on all sides. The melody was sweet

and plaintive. 'Madre!' cried a sudden childish treble, 'Madre mia.'

Again the odor of sweating human flesh, the smell of dust, all the vivid stir and stink of life. The cavalry had taken position, a not very large troop, on Rafael's left. Bits of metal rattled as the horses shook impatient heads. Life, keen and poignant. And, over a little hill, in the heart of a vast, calm plain, on a day of warm, untroubled loveliness — death. And life, though one clung to it so desperately, even after one had made up one's mind to surrender it, was only a madness, a vile madness.

Swords flashed along the line, bayoneted rifles came down into place, ready to be thrust into the throats and bellies of enemies not yet in sight. The defenders of Santa Eulalia began to move forward — for their homes, their wives, their sweethearts, for Eulalia Irredenta, for Mr. Harris's company in New York City, but chiefly because, under the circumstances, there seemed nothing else to do. Something like a great sigh of relief went up. Anything was better than waiting.

The line did not long hold its continuity. Men filed through little gullies, around hillocks. For a few minutes there was neither sight nor sound of the enemy. The mountains of Nueva Tolosa were in plain sight. The Eulalians were approaching them. Then, without warning, things began to happen with enormous rapidity.

Precisely what these things were was afterwards a matter of debate, not only among such of the actual

participants as survived the battle, but also among the experts who had looked on from a safe distance. In the following year, during the second session of Congress under the new administration, a joint congressional committee sat intermittently for some months conducting an investigation into the battle of Santa Clara, and at the end was nearly as wise as at the beginning. Some members of the committee believed that if something had not gone wrong, or if some one had not blundered on Thursday afternoon, the events of Friday and Saturday, which were far more startling, might not have taken place. But as these events became history, and as it was impracticable to make history which had actually happened unhappen, nothing was done.

If the combined legislative wisdom and legal acumen of Santa Eulalia could not piece together the story of the battle, it was obviously impossible for those who had merely been actors in it to do so. Domingo, in his rôle of old soldier, kept a clearer head than Rafael, but even his accounts were vague.

They compared their impressions as they lay in the bottom of a gully early Thursday evening. It was a magnificent evening as it had been a magnificent day. Not the faintest wisp of cloud veiled the serene depths of the late summer sky. The stars swam like ships of fire in a sea of liquid velvet. One did not so much look into the sky as through it.

'If Paradise is up yonder,' said Domingo solemnly, 'our poor fellows will be a long time getting there.'

They both shivered at the unspoken afterthought.

The feel of the hard earth, still warm under the cool evening air, was unspeakably good. Their bodies gloried in being alive, in their very thirst and fatigue, in their aching heads, in everything which, by being a sensation, reminded them that they were not dead.

'Better,' went on Domingo, 'this mattress of dirt and stones than a feather bed in heaven. I have no use for your heaven. I should be homesick there. It is all very well for those who have not learned how to live, but for an old soldier like myself — bah!' He spat into the darkness. 'And you, Rafaelito,' he asked, 'do you still love Death as much as ever, now that you have looked her in the eye and seen what a vile hag she is?'

No, Rafael didn't love death. That phase of his youth was gone, not to return. Death was negative and he was done with negatives. He wanted positive things, hard, biting, vicious things. To fight. To beat down other men's wills. To wrest from life some compensation for the thing life had stolen from him. He knew now how pitifully ingenuous he had been, how childishly trustful, how abysmally ignorant. Life had played a trick on him. Well, he would play a trick on life. He even saw how, if he and Domingo survived their present predicament, this might be done. He would use this force and canniness of Domingo's, he would join them to his own youth and recklessness and turn them into power. For the events of the afternoon had revealed to him what a genius for dominating other men resided in this philosophic old sergeant.

They wanted to smoke, but did not dare. The Tolosano patrols, though at some distance now, were still making their rounds. Whenever they found what they were looking for, there would be a little rattle of rifle fire. They were thorough, those Tolosanos. Poor devils that they were, they rarely had any fun at home. Life was somber, difficult, almost Puritanic in their native hills. Their amusements this evening took the place of the fiestas of which they had deprived themselves. They were more deliberately bloodthirsty than the Eulalians ever dreamed of being. They killed conscientiously, piously, in the full knowledge that they were doing what was right in the sight of God.

Domingo and Rafael talked in whispers, going over the events of the afternoon. The companies with which they had been entangled — one could hardly say attached — had been on the left wing of the advancing line, partly sheltered on their own left by the Eulalian cavalry. The cavalry, getting a little ahead, had received the enemy's fire, recovered and battered its way through the first of the Tolosanos. The Eulalian infantry, hearing the commotion, had come up on the run. The Tolosanos had apparently been surprised, and perhaps also grieved, being under the impression that the customs of war had left it to them to attack at their leisure. For some perceptible moments they wavered, and General Hernandez, despite his gloomy prophecies to the president, actually stood on the verge of a great victory. Had this victory occurred, the rôle played

by Mr. Harris and the Lady Anne in the history of Santa Eulalia would obviously have shrunk to small dimensions. But it did not occur. There was merely an illusion of victory, the rosy glow of a false dawn.

Rafael remembered firing his revolver at the backs of running men, and wishing that each one of them was the president. Domingo, guided by the instinct of an old soldier, had made for the big Tolosano gun, which was propped up in plain sight on a flatcar.

By this time, owing to a sequence of events which seemed perfectly natural at the time, but was never thoroughly explained, Domingo, with Rafael at his heels, was really leading the charge, a fact which the whole army was to know within twenty-four hours and the whole of Santa Eulalia within forty-eight hours. Had he run into a chance bullet, or even tripped and fallen as he emerged from the last gully, Santa Eulalia's future would have been a totally different thing.

The young Englishman was still working at his gun as the Eulalians, yelling like hyenas, swarmed over the slope two or three hundred feet away. He was a young man who was not much interested in war, but tremendously interested in machinery. He wore overalls and had a monkey wrench in his hand. The expression which his face assumed as he looked up was that of the whole-souled annoyance natural to a man who has been interrupted in a job which he thoroughly enjoys. He would have worn the same aggrieved air if he had been called to lunch while repairing the family automobile. He studied the

situation for a long moment or two, as though deciding whether or not to go on with his work. His hat, neatly nicked by a Santa Eulalian's bullet, fell from his head, and his yellow hair and bronzed, fair face were as nearly visible as the bull's-eye in a target.

'Kill that man!' screamed somebody — perhaps it was Rafael. 'Kill that man! The gun's no good without him.'

But the Englishman had dropped quietly over the side of the car, having concluded to postpone his repairs for a while. There followed the battle round the gun which was the most picturesque incident in the famous fight of Santa Clara. Perhaps because of the Englishman's coolness, perhaps because they had had time to estimate the strength of their assailants, the Tolosanos now rallied. The Englishman sat on the sand smoking. He did not much care for hand-to-hand combat. Indeed, except in a mechanical way, this was not his war. Three or four bullets kicked up the dust uncomfortably about him. As he did not at all wish to be killed if he could decently avoid it, he crawled under the flatcar. But he went on smoking. He enjoyed his pipe, though his aunt insisted that he smoked more than was good for him.

His labors could not have been interrupted for more than fifteen or twenty minutes. The Eulalians got no farther than the gun. They reached the Eulalian side of the flatcar and fired point-blank across it, and thrust with their bayonets at the flesh

and blood on the other side — damned souls in hell fighting and wallowing in blood, they knew not why. The Tolosanos began to creep up on the Eulalian flanks, outnumbering them two to one. The bullets came from three directions. The Eulalians fired back in a passion of hate and fell as they fired. Their ammunition began to give out. What they had was not always good — a profitable contract for the surplus war stores of a Balkan nation, thrice resold at a profit. The Tolosanos had done better by dealing with a responsible English firm suggested by Mr. Fergueson. This firm had been outfitting revolutions and small wars for three generations and had a reputation to maintain.

Rafael and Domingo were in the heart of the fighting. Rafael saw Domingo actually standing erect on the flatcar, firing and stabbing into the quick of the Tolosanos. He was yelling like a fiend. The sky had grown dark, the heat, the cries, the explosions, the horrible rage that seized Rafael made him drunker than he had ever been on wine. He must have had a hand-to-hand encounter, for afterwards he found his shirt in tatters and there were black marks as of strangling fingers on his throat. And across his right arm, diagonally, below the elbow, ran the unmistakable welt of a bullet.

General Hernandez had impressed upon his countrymen the great privilege that was theirs in dying for their country, but at the last moment, when all was obviously lost, the instinct of self-preservation reasserted itself. The Eulalians, their company of-

ficers almost all shot down, huddled together and began to retire. It was Domingo who tried to rally them. But their ragged formations broke under the quick pursuit. Men threw down their rifles and ran like rabbits. The Tolosanos were after them, bayoneting, wild with joy.

Had it not been that the ground in front of the Tolosano position was so cut up, and had not the red sun, at a critical moment, dropped neatly behind the purple ranges in front of Santa Eulalia and allowed the blessed twilight to slip across the plains, the war might have ended then and there. As it was, General Hernandez was able by sacrificing the regiments which had penetrated most deeply into the enemy lines to draw off with the remnants of his army. What was left of his trains was hauled back out of danger, to the mouth of the San Gregorio Pass, and the troops which had been able to extricate themselves stumbled along behind, shooting wild volleys into the darkness. And not all the casualties among the Eulalian officers that night were from Tolosano bullets.

Domingo and Rafael, like some hundreds of their companions who had begun their retreat too late, found themselves cut off. Some tried to run and were shot down as they ran. Others, who had dodged into little ravines and gullies, were harder to find. In some cases they were not found at all. Such had been Domingo's and Rafael's good fortune.

'You are as perfect a comrade as a soldier ever had,' said Domingo. 'You have the gift of immor-

tality. God is no doubt saving you for some purpose of His own. First you were to be killed by General Hernandez. He neglected to do so. Then you had every reason to expect to be killed by the President. He, too, forgot, to play his rôle. You have now been in an heroic action and have come out with no more than a pin scratch. I have so much confidence in your destiny that I would almost be willing to get up now and if you would follow walk through the Tolosano lines. My Rafaelito, you are admirable. I cannot see that you possess any valuable military qualities as yet, except that you belong to that eighty per cent of the human race which will fight when it has to. But you are a child of destiny, that is certain. I take off my hat to you, or would do so if some dirty rat of a Tolosano had not knocked it off for me.'

'Life owes me a debt,' mused Rafael. 'I will collect it if I can. I shall tell you why.' And he did tell him, in a few words, the concluding chapter of his relations with Vitoria.

'Did I not warn you?' Domingo demanded when he had finished. 'Did I not warn you it would be so? She has decided, as a sensible girl would, to sell herself to the highest bidder.'

'Yes,' agreed Rafael softly.

'That would be natural. I should do it myself if I were she. There is, of course, another possibility. This is that she wrote the note to save your life. I will go farther. It may be that she is the sort of woman who would sell whatever she had to sell,

provided she might thereby purchase the safety of the man she loves. There have been such women. I have read about them in books, and been told about them, though at the moment I forget their names.'

'Perhaps they may have thought that was the reason they sold themselves,' returned Rafael. 'But I now see that reasons are not so simple.'

Domingo chuckled softly. 'What a cynic my poor fledgling, wet still from his mother's womb, has now become! However, that is no reason for our letting ourselves be butchered by our friends over yonder. They take their work so seriously, those Tolosanos. We are dead men if we stay here till morning. It will be no darker to-night than it is now.'

They started crawling with infinite pains, toward friendly lines, toward Santa Eulalia. Whenever footsteps approached or metal clattered or voices became audible, they flung themselves flat and lay breathless, in an agony of terror. The hardened old soldier, to whom the single life was of no importance, and the boy who yesterday could not bear to be alive, were alike, when the pinch came, in their sweating dread of dissolution.

The Englishman had finished his interrupted job of repairing the gun. One after another, at intervals of half an hour, he began sending shells westward. At about this time, too, Santa Eulalia's celebration of the victory of Santa Clara reached its height.

X

'You can say,' explained Mr. Harris to the editor of *El Telegrafeo*, 'you can say that, after inflicting heavy losses upon the enemy in a surprise attack, our troops made a strategic retreat toward Santa Eulalia. You can point out that the more the Tolosanos advance into our territory, the longer and thinner their line of communication will be and the harder it will be for them to bring their full strength to bear. You can hint, without exactly saying so, that we are preparing a trap, and that they are walking into it. No one will ever know the difference.'

This was Friday morning. Mr. Harris had risen a little earlier than usual. He had risen, in fact, almost as soon as he opened his eyes. He had risen with a start which had landed him in the middle of the room before Antonia had fully waked up. But that was not all. Some psychological cog within him had slipped, perhaps irreparably. He could not look at Antonia's mouth and keep his own in its accustomed shape. He strove for dignity and achieved only sheepishness. After a minute or two, Antonia sat up in bed in order to have a better look at him. She was one of those fortunate young women who appear at their very best when they are disheveled. Her dark hair hung like a mop about her wickedly beautiful dark eyes. She laughed. Her laugh began with a little squealing sound and proceeded, in its

artless Southern way, in the general direction of hysterics.

Mr. Harris was alarmed. 'Don't!' he begged. 'Some one might hear.'

'But,' protested Antonia, 'it isn't wrong to laugh, is it? You Yankees are so strange. Don't you ever laugh? I don't think I've ever seen you laugh. Please laugh for me.'

'Do you think this situation is funny?' demanded Mr. Harris. 'You've got me into a fix, that's what you've done.' He was so excited that most of his Spanish left him, but Antonia managed to understand.

'Anyway,' he insisted, 'you look funny.' She stuffed the corner of the sheet into her mouth and went on with her hysterics. Something in her eye aroused a strange, almost formless suspicion in Mr. Harris's breast.

'Look here!' he began brutally. 'Did you know this was going to happen? Did you plan it?'

Antonia reflected. 'I don't always seem to know,' she explained cautiously.

'Always? Then it has happened before.'

Her eyes opened, wide and innocent. 'Of course. Why not? It's fun. I like fun.'

It seemed to Mr. Harris that this was not quite all that was in her transparent Latin-American mind. However, it was enough for the time being. He had finally got hold of an emotion with some dignity to it — the emotion of jealousy.

'Antonia,' he said, 'I'm disappointed in you. I

had been thinking, lately, that in time I might come to be very fond of you. I didn't want to, because it would have created a very serious problem for me. I even thought you might like me a little. I didn't know there were other men in your life.'

'But I do like you a little,' returned Antonia. 'I like almost every one a little. And I got used to you, bringing your breakfast and talking to you.'

The situation was not growing any less embarrassing, at least for Mr. Harris. Finally he said, 'Antonia, I'm going out. I've got my work to do and I've got to think things over.'

'Then,' said Antonia brightly, 'I'll go and get you your breakfast.'

She slid gracefully out of bed and began putting on such parts of her clothing as she had removed the night before. Mr. Harris was dressing. Mr. Harris was an extraordinarily pure man, even by Bangor standards. He was as good, indeed, as Antonia was bad. So the fact was that no woman had ever dressed or undressed in his presence since his childhood, except at a rare visit to the Follies, and that lacked the personal touch of the process now going on before his eyes. He resented it. Damn it, anyhow! Why did she have to be so pretty? Why did there have to be women in the world? Men could get their work done so much more easily and tranquilly without them. He had thought he had succeeded in shutting them out of his life. He hadn't expected even to be married for years and years — not until he could support a wife in the costly Park Avenue apartment

of which he had so often dreamed. On the other hand, affairs with women outside of marriage were not only wrong according to his inherited and acquired standards, but they were also likely to be horribly costly. He knew that, because some of his friends had had them. Every unmarried adult male in Santa Eulalia was expected to have as many mistresses as he could afford. Mr. Harris had refrained from bowing to this convention, even though he knew that this restrain caused gossip of an especially unflattering nature. And now — Antonia! What in hell was he going to do?

'Antonia!' he said suddenly, 'you are laughing at me again.' She was, really. And what could it mean? Could a woman like a man — Mr. Harris was too shy to use the word love — well enough to let him take the liberties Mr. Harris had taken, and at the same time think him funny? If she liked him she ought to idealize him. He ought to be a sort of hero in her eyes. She ought to think always of his comfort, his welfare, his career. That was woman's duty as he saw it. It was the feminine instinct in its perfect expression.

'I was thinking of something else,' explained Antonia, resuming an aspect of extreme seriousness. 'I was thinking of a little joke.'

She had got her clothes on now, and swiftly she whisked up and out of the door. She put her head in again, shook back her tangled hair and laughed once more, apparently still about the same little joke. Mr. Harris did not know what to make of it. He

shaved, finished dressing, and sat down to wait for breakfast. At least he tried to sit down and wait. Breakfast didn't come. He went out to look for Antonia and found Antonia's mother. The señora, a still comely woman in her late thirties, seemed also to have a gleam of amusement in her eyes. It appeared that Antonia had gone away, just where her mother didn't know. Could Antonia's mother get Señor Harris some breakfast? Was Señor Harris — God forbid — unwell?

Mr. Harris did not wait to reply. He flung himself rudely out of the house. Something was dreadfully, dreadfully wrong with this romance of his. However, he must put his mind on other things than Antonia. He must do this not only because thinking about Antonia was making him horribly nervous, but because his career was really at stake in this war between Santa Eulalia and Nueva Tolosa.

The first thing was to find out, if he could, what had actually occurred at Santa Clara. The editor of *El Telegrafeo* would undoubtedly have some of the desired information. An inkling of the true state of affairs had perhaps penetrated in some mysterious way into the public mind, for Santa Eulalia on Friday morning was in anything but a festive mood. Some of the noisiest of the celebrators had been picked up in the streets by General Hernandez's recruiting squads. The loved ones whom these reluctant volunteers had left behind so abruptly could not help wondering why a victorious army should be in such urgent need of soldiers. They were doing their

wondering in undertones, but the undertones had a ring in them that meant a good deal to thoughtful students of Santa Eulalian politics. The streets were quiet without being sleepy. The dogs at the corners of the alleys growled when Mr. Harris passed by. Usually they did not growl unless they were kicked, for whatever energy they had they liked to save for hunting fleas.

All this, joined with the events of the early morning, made Mr. Harris thoughtful and anxious, and his mind was not relieved when he saw the expression on the face of the editor of *El Telegrafeo*. The journalist was a thin, dark, intellectual young man who had spent a year at Harvard and wore horn-rimmed glasses. He explained to Mr. Harris that as nearly as he could find out the battle of Santa Clara had been anything but a victory for the Eulalians. He added some details. The army seemed to have halted somewhere near the San Gregorio Pass. Reenforcements had been sent up in large numbers during the night. The trouble was that the recruits were not trained soldiers, nor were they well supplied with ammunition. There were darker rumors. The army was inclined to be resentful of the way in which it had been handled. Stragglers from the regiments which had been cut to pieces at Santa Clara had come into camp complaining of bad cartridges, poor support, and incompetent generalship. Hernandez, assuredly, had not gained in popularity. But neither had the president.

Mr. Harris meditated gloomily. The military

situation could be helped only by the arrival of the munitions ship, which ought to reach port on the following morning. The thing for the army to do was to hold out until then. Neither Mr. Harris nor the editor could help that. Even the president couldn't do much more, since he had sent all the men and all the supplies he could lay hands on. But obviously something could be done to create the right sort of public opinion in Santa Eulalia. So Mr. Harris and the editor set to work to plan a communiqué which would bring together in a not too pessimistic or foolishly inclusive way some of the facts about the action at Santa Clara.

'No one will ever know the difference,' Mr. Harris went on. 'I don't believe in lying. We must tell them the truth, but in such a way that they will understand it.'

'Ah, yes,' answered the editor with a smile. 'It is what is called in your country interpretative journalism.'

'Exactly,' agreed Mr. Harris, without any smile. He had been brought up not to tell lies. None of his ancestors, so far as he knew, had told lies. He would not have admitted to any one that he was telling a lie now. He called his lies by other names.

The editor had a telephonic communication with the war office. General Hernandez had not yet returned from the front, though he was expected. There was no more news. Something was the matter with the wires. The editor hung up and concocted a communiqué in Spanish, which Mr. Harris, in order

to ensure secrecy up to the very moment of publication, agreed to take to the president for his official approval. He promised to telephone the editor as soon as the presidential release had been obtained.

He went out again into the still streets. It occurred to him that he had not had any breakfast and he stopped at the Café de la Natividad to make up for the omission and to anticipate lunch. Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson, as was inevitable, were both there, looking tired and quarrelsome. Mr. Fergueson eyed Mr. Harris skeptically. Mr. Harris wondered how much he really knew.

'How about that famous victory of yours?' asked Mr. Fergueson.

'I didn't say there had been a victory,' answered Mr. Harris. 'I only repeated what I had heard. The truth is that the earlier reports seem to have been somewhat exaggerated.'

'I said as much, you may remember.' Mr. Fergueson was triumphant.

'Yes, and you wished as much,' broke in Mr. Riley bitterly. 'You sit here eating Eulalian bread and drinking Eulalian wine and wishing them harm all the time. I call that ungrateful.'

'Ungrateful!' cried Mr. Fergueson. 'Ungrateful! Did I come here for my own pleasure? And what if I don't like these people? Is it their fault or mine? Why do they have to be that kind of people?'

'God made them,' said Mr. Riley reverently, 'just as He made you.'

'God made fleas, too.' Mr. Fergueson paused in

the act of scratching himself just above the belt. He went on. 'How can any sane person take a place like this seriously? A man can't keep decent. They won't let him. Take this matter of fleas. It's because people don't wash. I take a bath every morning and I have to suffer for people who don't take three baths a year. Scratch all day. Scratch all night. Talk about their bread and wine. I found a cockroach in my bread yesterday. I don't touch their wine when I can help it. Might as well drink vinegar. There's nothing fit to eat or drink in the whole damned country except what's imported. They're too damned lazy to draw a long breath. They need to be civilized, that's what they need. They need a good colonial administrator.'

'There's a good deal in what you say,' agreed Mr. Harris.

'Maybe there is, but it's lucky no one around here understands English.' Mr. Riley was gazing about at the other tables. Some animated conversations were going on. In the silence which followed among the three Nordics he listened attentively.

'What are they talking about?' asked Mr. Fergueson, who was as wretched a linguist as Mr. Harris himself.

'They are talking,' said Mr. Riley, 'about the revolution.'

Mr. Harris started up, his face growing pale. 'What revolution?' he demanded.

'The next revolution, of course. They are not interested in history and they certainly don't give a

damn about the Boston Tea Party. Nobody could have hurt their feelings by taking their tea away from them. At home we have elections. Here they have revolutions. It is the same thing. It allows the populace to work off its emotions and at the same time takes its mind off its fleas. If Santa Eulalia loses this war there will be a revolution right away, just as there was in France after the war of 1871, and just as there was in Germany after the World War. Why? Because human nature must have its say. If it can't express itself by making foreigners unhappy, it will do the next best thing by kicking up a row at home.'

'There's something underhanded happening,' Mr. Fergueson broke in. 'I haven't even been able to get my washing done this week. I've scarcely a clean shirt to my name.'

Mr. Harris called for the waiter and paid his bill. It was larger than he had expected. He protested. The waiter shrugged his shoulders. 'What can the señor expect in times like this?' he asked politely.

'In love and war,' remarked Mr. Riley, who had been waiting for precisely this opening, 'all things are fair. Which leads me to say that I trust you enjoyed yourself last night, Harris.'

'Who said anything about my enjoying myself?' Mr. Harris's cheeks and rather prominent ears were burning.

'A little bird told me,' Mr. Riley explained.

Mr. Harris examined his tormentor's face suspiciously. How much did Mr. Riley know? If any

one had been telling stories about him, who was it? He went on his way to the presidential palace in a humor even worse than before.

A sentry at the door reminded him that the hour of the siesta was at hand. He knew that Mr. Harris stood well with the administration, but, on the other hand, he was afraid that the administration might not want to be waked up at this inauspicious moment. Why, he asked, didn't the señor find a comfortable chair somewhere and sleep?

'Sleep!' Mr. Harris threw up his arms in a gesture of rage and despair. Sleep! That was the curse of Santa Eulalia, the curse of half Latin America. They slept while their resources lay undeveloped, while their labor spent itself in thin air, while disease brought on by bad sanitation ravaged their ports. They lived lives totally useless by all the measurements Mr. Harris could bring to bear, and enjoyed them. That was the worst of it — they didn't deserve to enjoy life, and yet they did.

All this had to be changed. That was Mr. Harris's mission, it was for this that he had undertaken his Eulalian avatar. He saw railways, mines, factories, telephones, radios, automobiles, good roads, airplanes, motion pictures, bathtubs, hospitals, modern prisons, electric lights, a whole catalogue of Nordic inventions and devices, transforming Santa Eulalia, transforming the backward parts of all Latin America.

He saw himself as a missionary in this process; he saw this conflict between Santa Eulalia and Nueva

Tolosa as part of a necessary crusade. What Cecil Rhodes had vainly tried to do in Africa he, Mr. Harris, would actually accomplish in Latin America. Then he wondered what had become of Antonia, and after that he bribed the sentry with five pesos to let him pass to the president's door. For five pesos more the sentry would have committed murder. He was very obliging.

Mr. Harris found himself at last in the chief executive's presence. Santa Eulalia's most distinguished citizen was reclining upon a sofa in an apartment especially set aside for the administrative siesta. The sofa was so wide and so luxurious that it might almost have been called a divan, and the room itself bore traces of the varying tastes of the several presidents. There was a faint smell of perfume, or perhaps of several perfumes. There were two doors, one, by which Mr. Harris had entered, leading from the executive chambers, the other apparently giving into a hall and affording a less public means of ingress and egress. Both doors were massive and possessed locks. These details testified to the thoughtfulness and foresight of Santa Eulalia's governmental architects.

The president's nap, short as it was, had done him good, for he greeted Mr. Harris with an unaffected smile. Indeed, it was so broad a smile as almost to amount to a laugh.

'Ah!' And now, at his own humor, the great man actually did laugh. 'The fairy prince and the sleeping beauty!' He yawned, dropped his silk-socked

feet to the floor, and fumbled for his shoes. 'You were lucky, Mr. Harris, in finding me alone. There have been occasions when you would have knocked in vain.'

'I have come on a very important matter,' said Mr. Harris.

'Yes.' The president nodded understandingly. 'I know. You are always coming and going on important matters. It's a habit you Yankees have.'

'I suppose you know that your troops have been driven back,' replied Mr. Harris sternly.

The president did not seem perturbed. 'Of course I know. Hernandez kept in touch until early this morning. But we expected that. You heard him explain it. It is part of our strategy. When our ship gets in — well, everything will be all right.'

'The ship will not be in until to-morrow,' Mr. Harris went on. 'I understand the wires have been cut between here and the front. Much may happen between now and to-morrow. Much may have happened since this morning.'

'One expects things to happen when a war is going on. There will be reverses. Men will be killed. But we shall beat them. We have the people with us. Your own assistance, Señor Harris, has had much to do with that. The new army bills and the emergency budget went through without a dissenting vote this morning.'

'Señor Vargas was not there?'

The president shook his head. 'No. He is in jail — for his own protection, I might say. There's no telling what the people would do.'

Mr. Harris had known the professor slightly — a harmless old man who believed that Plato had anticipated much of the Christian doctrine and had published a treatise to prove it. Still, even harmless old professors ought not to get in the way of progress. Mr. Harris dropped that subject.

'Are you sure the people are with you?' he asked.

The president looked worried. 'Why not?'

'I've noticed a few things. That's all. Possibly General Hernandez didn't tell you all that has been happening. The truth is there's been some talk of a new president.' Mr. Harris put the case more strongly than he would have done had it not been for the president's naturally buoyant disposition. Besides, he wanted to feel, and make the president feel, his, Mr. Harris's, own power.

The president began to walk nervously up and down. It was not so much the thought of Santa Eulalia having a new president that worried him, though he did honestly enjoy the honors and perquisites of office. He was thinking about the imaginative ways the Santa Eulalians had of disposing of their ex-presidents. His constituents were nothing if not thorough in these little matters.

'Well,' he demanded, 'what do you want? I suppose you came here because you wanted something. What am I going to do?'

'First you must read and authorize this communiqué.' Mr. Harris handed the carefully prepared document to him.

The president read it. 'That's very well put,' he

commented. 'I could hardly have done it better myself. I don't see why you should be discouraged, Señor Harris.' He gave the paper back. Mr. Harris wondered if he had expressed himself in the communiqué too optimistically for his own purposes.

'I didn't say we shouldn't pull through,' he replied. 'I merely wanted you to realize the seriousness of the situation and to be fully aware of the services we have been able to render you.'

The president took Mr. Harris's hand with an impulsive kindness which was often of great value to him. 'Señor Harris,' he cried, 'you may be entirely easy on that point. The Republic will not be ungrateful. We shall insist upon annexation as a preliminary to peace. Eulalia Irredenta shall be restored to the mother country. And as soon as we take possession your bill shall be put through. You should be able to commence operations within a month after the treaty is signed.'

'I am glad we understand each other,' Mr. Harris said.

The president's peculiar smile had suddenly returned. So many persons had smiled at Mr. Harris in that enigmatical manner to-day! 'And yet' — the smile widened — 'I am not always sure we do. I had thought of you, Señor Harris, as a very serious person. I had even suspected that you were not wholly aware of the charms our city has to offer — the social charms, I might say. But it now seems that you have your lighter side, you have your moments.'

Did one of the three fates smile, too, as the president spoke? Did the muse of history turn a new page and dip into the inkwell ready to write? They might have. They had reason.

Mr. Harris felt, for the third time that day, a fiery flush mounting to his cheeks and ears. He hated the sensation. It menaced his dignity. It weakened his sense of power. He felt his superiority over this fat, cheap, dirty, corrupt, bloodthirsty little politician actually beginning to slip. He, Mr. Harris! Was it conscience? Had he wronged Antonia? Was he being subtly punished by his New England tribal god for breaking away from the codes of his ancestors?

'I have no idea whatever as to what you mean,' he returned, as icily as possible.

The president brought his oily face unpleasantly near to Mr. Harris's. 'Oh, yes, you do. Your landlady's daughter. The beautiful Señorita Antonia. Ah, you have been sly, Señor Harris! You have deceived us all. The joke is on us.'

Mr. Harris tried to brazen it out. 'I hope that your highness does not believe every scandalous rumor that is told you.'

The president shook his head. 'No, Señor Harris. If I had believed all that I was told, I should not now be president. It depends upon who tells me.'

'And who told you this?' Mr. Harris was furious.

'I had it on the very best authority. I had it from the señorita herself.'

'It's a lie!'

'But why should any one lie about such a matter?' The president was honestly puzzled. 'Didn't you have a good time? What is the matter with you Yankees, anyway?'

'Antonia told.' Mr. Harris's voice had dropped to a low and mournful cadence, quite different from the violent tones of a moment ago. 'Antonia told you.'

'Why shouldn't she? We are good friends. Besides, there was a little wager involved.'

'A little wager?' Mr. Harris repeated the words faintly. They didn't seem to make sense.

'Yes.' The president expanded genially in anticipation of the good joke he was about to relate to Señor Harris. 'It is very funny from our point of view, you will understand. Antonia and I have had little talks together, about politics and other things. She is a very promising young woman, and I naturally have an interest in her — a fatherly interest in developing her undoubted talents. She sings well. She might make an actress, an opera singer. The Santa Eulalian nightingale. People would say, where is Santa Eulalia? They would run to the map to find out. If there are women like that in Santa Eulalia, they would say, why not go there? That would mean money to us.'

Mr. Harris groaned. 'For God's sake, get on.'

'I am trying to make you understand,' continued the president, 'why it is that we made our little wager. In the course of one of our talks I commented upon your apparent indifference to the

charms of our Eulalian womanhood. Antonia, poor child, had noticed the same peculiarity. Her feelings had been hurt by it, Señor Harris. Her mother's other lodgers had been more appreciative. I then said to her, in a humorous way, that I was sure you had taken the vow of chastity and that not even one so lovely as she could induce you to break it. I said I had heard there were organizations in the United States called Rotary Clubs, and that one of the rules of these clubs was that their members should have nothing to do with women. I said I was sure you were a member of a Rotary Club because, in fact, I think you once mentioned it. Perhaps I am wrong. But Antonia replied that she was sure she could induce you to break so foolish a resolution. You see, Señor Harris, there is nothing like indifference to make a man attractive to women. Antonia adored you because you paid no attention to her. So we made a bet.'

'I see.' Mr. Harris could not control his voice very well. It sounded weak, considering the circumstances. 'You made a bet.'

'For the sake of the sport, you understand,' the president continued. 'I bet that she could not cause you to lose what I believe you Anglo-Saxons call your virtue. And she wagered that I was wrong. If she lost she was to make a certain payment to me — not a very painful one, I assure you. If I lost I was to give her a bracelet. As you see, that explains everything.'

'Yes, it explains everything.' Mr. Harris sat with

his head in his hands, studying the floor. His face had regained its natural pallor when he looked up.

'You do not mind?' asked the president anxiously.

'Mind?' returned Mr. Harris dully. 'Mind? Why should I mind?'

The president beamed. 'That is the way to look at it, Señor Harris. Why should you mind? You have had your night.'

Mr. Harris had not yet smiled. He did not look as though he were going to smile. He was gazing at the president with the dispassionate distaste which he might have lavished upon a toad. 'Yes,' he repeated, 'I have had my night.' He walked to the door by which he had entered. At the door he turned, and added, 'And I shall have my day, too.'

An expression of acute dismay, of bewildered uncomprehension, spread over the executive's face as the door closed. Mr. Harris, even in his agony, treasured it.

In the corridor he found a telephone and called up the editor of *El Telegrafeo*. He had a terrible time getting a connection, for Santa Eulalia was slumbering peacefully. He reached the editor at last. 'See here,' he ordered, 'you mustn't publish that piece we wrote this morning.'

'Didn't he like it?' The editor's voice was anxious. 'Shall we write another one?'

'No. Don't publish any. Don't publish anything at all about the war.'

There were feverish exclamations at the other

end of the wire. It was unbelievable, said the editor, it was impossible.

'It's got to be possible,' declared Mr. Harris doggedly. 'If you know what side your bread is buttered on, you'll do as I say and ask no more questions.' He hung up and went his way.

His way led directly across the plaza to the house of the Canon Roderigo. He knocked and was let in after a brief delay, for the canon chose to mortify the flesh by omitting the siesta. The two men were casually acquainted, but they had never been alone before. The canon rose courteously, but in some surprise. Mr. Harris explained his errand, though he did not explain precisely what it was that led him to undertake it. He talked long and earnestly. When he had finished, he waited for the canon to speak.

The canon got to his feet, motioning Mr. Harris to remain seated. Over Mr. Harris this prelate of a church he had been brought up to hate and distrust exercised a curious spell. This was partly optical, for the canon was quite tall and Mr. Harris was looking up at him. But Mr. Harris also felt unavoidably that the canon was more than an individual, more than a bundle of personal faults, virtues, and acquisitions. He was an institution. He went back into the ages, back into those long centuries before anything remotely resembling Mr. Harris had seen the light of day. What he said and did had the weight of all those centuries behind it. All at once Mr. Harris was very young and insecure. He had a conscious-

ness, though he could not have put it into words, that that fierce wave of material energy of which he himself was a part would shatter itself in vain against this calm, indifferent confidence. He saw, too, all too clearly in the revealing moment, how the canon's tradition, superimposed upon the people though it was, yet followed every curve and angularity of their temperament. The gods of things as they were fought with the canon. And how strong, how obstinate those gods were! Mr. Harris had a lonesome sensation, an actual physical ache of solitariness, in the pit of his stomach. Why had he ever dreamed that he could disregard this man? Why had he ever bothered with that fat pig — he unknowingly used the very phrase which had come to Rafael's lips — over there in the presidential palace? Here, before him, was that part of Santa Eulalia which survived all revolutions, all changes. If he could not ally himself with it he would fail.

'I shall be very frank,' the canon began. 'In that way we shall understand each other. The Church is not concerned with politics. Its interests are spiritual, not worldly. It cannot become partisan, in a situation such as the present, unless those interests are menaced. Naturally I would not look to you, who are, in the eyes of the Church, a heretic — you must excuse me for saying so: it is a theological term which must not mar the friendliness of our relations — for even such assistance as a layman can give in a spiritual crisis. Nevertheless, there may be occasions upon which we may both legitimately

desire the same things. We are both, I know, men of peace.'

Mr. Harris faltered under the canon's eye. Was he, Mr. Harris, in any degree responsible for what was going on over there in the hills? How could he have known that the Tolosanos wouldn't back down? The president had assured him that a mere show of force would be all that was necessary. And the fools were standing in the way of progress — of that progress which meant not merely profits to Mr. Harris's employers, but higher wages, steadier employment, and greater security for the Eulalians themselves — and not only for the Eulalians, but for the Tolosanos, if only they could get it through their thick heads. Still Mr. Harris did experience a slight sensation of guilt. He might as well, he reflected, have gone to confession and had it over with.

'We are both men of peace,' repeated the canon, 'and we both, I know, desire the welfare of the people. Consequently I think we may see our way to coöperate in the joint purpose of restoring peace and prosperity as soon as possible. Between us I am sure we may remove whatever obstacles are in the way.'

'General Hernandez can be relied upon?' Mr. Harris put his statement in the form of a question.

The canon did not answer immediately. 'He has much in common with our — may I say our, Señor Harris? — point of view,' he said after a moment or two. 'He is a child of the Church. Yet I am not positive that he is the sword that will best fit into

the scabbard of this occasion. He is too subtle. He understands too much. He is not enough a man of the people. We need, perhaps, a more simple, more primitive mind. The Church, Señor Harris, has always known this secret. We have more often than not taken our princes from the common dust. In politics that is harder to imagine — or so I am told. I believe you have achieved it once or twice in your own country.'

'And if not Hernandez,' inquired Mr. Harris, 'who?'

'I do not know. But if what you have told me is true, I think we can count upon him to emerge from the situation. All this is in the hands of God. I am ready to do His will as I see it, and in the mean time to wait until I learn what that will is.'

'We have a saying,' Mr. Harris observed, 'that God helps those who help themselves.'

The canon smiled. 'It is not a new saying. The Church has not been unmindful of it.' He paused. 'It is a delicate matter,' he went on, 'but you are sure that you are entirely safe in your present lodgings. The president is impulsive.' He waved his hand. 'We can offer, if you wish, sanctuary.'

Mr. Harris shook a little, but his pride was touched. 'I am an American citizen,' he declared grandly. 'I thank you for your offer, but I do not think it would be fitting for me to accept it.'

The canon absent-mindedly held out his hand. Mr. Harris shook it instead of kissing it, at which the canon permitted himself a gentle smile. He did not,

he never would understand these Yankees, yet they amused him so that he almost liked them.

Mr. Harris, upon leaving the canon's residence, sought his own lodgings with as much haste as possible. The same queer hush which he had noticed in the morning still hung over the city, a more than prolonged siesta, a fantastic quietness which was not so much peace as a slowly accumulating violence. Men, and women, too, were talking in groups about the streets and in the plaza. Nor was it the usual idle gossip of a late summer afternoon. Nobody laughed. As Mr. Harris went swiftly by the Café de la Natividad, he saw Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson still sitting there, a little drunker than when he had last seen them. Mr. Riley held in his hand a late copy of *El Telegrafeo* and Mr. Fergueson was leaning forward as though about to listen. But there was nothing to listen to. The editor had taken Mr. Harris's words at their face value. The paper contained not a line, nor a phrase, about the war. Mr. Riley evidently believed that his own eyesight was at fault, as it often was at this time of day. He was trying first one distance, then another. Then he began turning the pages rapidly. Mr. Harris did not stop.

He was about to perform the most important of his afternoon's errands. Upon reaching his room, which he did without encountering either Antonia or her mother, he went immediately to his radio sending set, and after finding it in good order began calling the Lady Anne. He was a long time in getting a

reply, so long that the sweat began to pour down his face and his hand shook as he worked at the key. The operator on the Lady Anne had been having a chat with a friend on a fruit liner in the Caribbean. When he finally acknowledged his call, Mr. Harris's fingers flew as they had done in the old days in Bangor. He became, in words which hurtled through a hundred and fifty miles of space, and which penetrated, in their impartial radiations, the presidential palace, the Café de la Natividad, the ranch house of the Soberanes, the battle-ground of the eastern hills, all the little world of Santa Eulalia, if it had been equipped to listen — he became almost vociferous. The operator on the Lady Anne, who made his living by miracles, yawned as he wrote the words down. He and his friend on the fruit liner were arranging a rendezvous for the next time they were in New Orleans together. They knew two girls, they'd go out to Spanish Fort and dance.

He took Mr. Harris's message to the captain, got the captain's answer, and shot it back with the captain's compliments to Mr. Harris. Then he got the fruit liner again. How about a little dinner at Antoine's first? Could they manage it? No chance of spending money at sea, that was certain, unless you lost it playing poker with the engineer.

The wireless operator was unaware that he had just had a hand in making history. Even if he had been aware, he might not have cared, for he was a blasé young man. They'd have to take a taxi, he

supposed. Still, they could ride as far as Napoleon Avenue on the street car and then pick up the taxi. That would save something. He could swing that much.

The aviator lounged in, a man in his early thirties who had done some flying on the Western front. He hoped the damned engine would work and that they wouldn't expect him to take off on a postage stamp. He wasn't going to get cracked up for nothing. Up on the quarter deck the captain was swearing softly to the mate. He didn't like this business of lightering on an exposed shore. He wished he had a regular freight run, up through the canal and along the coast to Portland, for example. He liked a good port, not these ratty places on the southwest coast where, as often as not, a man had to be his own pilot.

Mr. Harris had underestimated the president's astuteness. He had not much more than finished receiving the Lady Anne's reply when there came a loud knock on his door — too loud to be either Antonia or her mother. He sat still while the knock was repeated. Then he crossed the room, turned the knob, and faced a sergeant and two privates of the presidential guard. The bayonets, the hard faces under the chin-strapped caps. No, they wouldn't dare. The marines would be down in no time if they did. But the marines would do him precious little good after he was dead. The window. No, he couldn't make it. Besides, if they were in earnest the house was probably surrounded.

He threw up his arms and backed away. 'Ameri-

cano!' he cried hoarsely. 'If you touch me the marines will come and kill you.'

The sergeant instantly became conciliatory. He had heard of the marines. Children in Santa Eulalia always stopped crying, or biting, or kicking their little brothers and sisters when their mothers threatened to send for the marines.

'I ask a thousand pardons, señor,' said the sergeant. 'We are not going to hurt you. But his highness the president would like to borrow your machine there for a few days.'

'What good will it do him?' demanded Mr. Harris, relieved but wrathy. 'He doesn't know how to make it go. See all the little wheels. No one but myself in Santa Eulalia can turn them the right way.'

The two soldiers had put down their rifles and were gathering up the radio apparatus, all of it, including Mr. Harris's perfectly innocent receiving set. 'His highness will probably explain,' the sergeant answered apologetically. 'All we can do is to obey our orders. Go with God, señor.' Even a sergeant could be polite in Santa Eulalia.

But Mr. Harris was not mollified. 'Look here!' he cried, 'this is robbery. This is against the law.'

'No.' The sergeant shook his head positively. 'It can't be against the law. It is the president who makes the laws.'

Mr. Harris's radio outfit was already going through the door. Mr. Harris caught sight of Antonia in the passageway outside. Even in that trying moment he noticed that she wore a bright new

gold bracelet on her left arm. The sergeant picked up the two rifles which his men were now unable to carry.

'Buenas noches, señor,' he said, by way of topping off his previous farewell.

'You go to hell!' replied Mr. Harris bitterly, in English. Then he called after the retreating detachment. 'Wait a minute!'

The sergeant came back. He had been very considerate of Señor Harris's feelings and he supposed that the señor now intended to tip him. 'You can tell the president,' said Mr. Harris in a loud and triumphant tone, 'that you came twenty minutes too late. Tell him to chop the radio set into splinters and pick his teeth with it. Tell him I'm through with it.'

The sergeant could not help looking melancholy, first, because he had not received a tip and, second, because he and his men would have arrived half an hour sooner if they had not stopped for a drink and a game of cards on the way.

'Now, get out!' shouted Mr. Harris, again reverting to English. 'On your way! Move on!' The sergeant, his hands encumbered with deadly weapons and his ingenuous mind confused by the complexities of the situation, fled just in time to escape a well-aimed kick.

When Mr. Harris turned there was Antonia, her lovely and innocent eyes full of what as late as yesterday afternoon he would have assumed to be unfeigned admiration. She put her hands on her hips.

The bracelet shone in the gentle light of the declining afternoon.

'See!' cried Antonia, removing her left hand from her hip and extending it in a graceful gesture, so that the bracelet danced with the movement. 'Isn't it beautiful?'

All the irritations which Mr. Harris had experienced during the day suddenly concentrated themselves upon Antonia. He was the more angry because she was so very, very pretty.

'You little cat!' he exclaimed, moving toward her. 'You little cat! Don't you know that I know who gave you that bracelet — and why?'

She flung her head back. 'What of it, Señor Harris? What if he did give me a bracelet? What if he did make me play a little joke on you? I'd do anything for him, Señor Harris. He's big and fat and nice. He takes me on his knee sometimes. I love him!'

It would have been hard to say which of the two was the more surprised at what happened immediately after Antonia's declaration. At any rate, Mr. Harris, making a sudden rush, seized her before she could escape, took her, but not affectionately, across his own knee, and spanked her.

XI

VITORIA knelt beside her window in the darkness, her eyes turned upward through the branches of the oaks toward the fathomless sea of night and stars. Her hands were crossed upon her thighs, and the curve of her white throat would have seemed lovely had any one been there to see. One who saw her, indeed, might have thought that she was praying, purely, madonna-like. But the agony that tore her heart was that there seemed no more anything to pray for.

There had been dear magic once, and now the magic was all gone. There was nothing in the shadows, nothing in the slow drift of starlight through the leaves, nothing to bring comfort and illusion. The great madness had swallowed the whole world. It leered and exulted. It trafficked in holy things and drove sharp bargains, then laid a sly finger against a grotesque nose and guffawed. Again it took the shape of General Hernandez, of her own father, of the president.

Was it an unavoidable destiny that had overwhelmed Rafael and herself? Had they conceived of something, the two of them, under her oak, that the world would not tolerate? Of something so lovely that the world must crush and destroy it, else the life of trafficking and bickering, of plotting and butchering that was the world's life could not go on.

They had stumbled, maybe, upon a secret of the gods — a secret not meant for poor humanity to know. To cling to that ecstasy would have been to rise above the level of the common earth — to rise blindingly for a moment or two, and die. Should they have chosen that? It was too late! For, as she now saw it, it was no mere compromise with madness that she had made; no, she had of her own will become a part of it, a part of that insane mood that for three days now had dominated Santa Eulalia — an outbreak of that black passion that lay forever at the heart of humanity, that would not let any one, for very long, be tender, or brave, or beautiful. And Rafael, too, somewhere in the eastern hills, he, too, was mad. Madness was the price of life. She had paid it, paid it in full, in those seven words she had written to Rafael. Seven daggers that stabbed her, and might also have stabbed him, to the very heart. The further payment she was ready to make this very night, a payment many women had made before her, was by comparison a little thing.

She could not hate the president any more than she could hate a beetle. He was the instrument, she supposed, of a force larger and more malignant than himself. Perhaps of that God to whom she had been accustomed to pray so devoutly in the cathedral almost every Sunday morning at early mass. She rose with a little smile of scorn. If that were God, she would have no more to do with Him. She would make a God of her own who would not be jealous when people were happy. A God who was

Himself happy, as the God of the cathedral was not. A God who knew what it was to dance and make love. A God whom the padre would probably call the Devil. And then, from force of habit, she crossed herself.

Dolores knocked, and then came in with a lamp to help her with her toilette, as she had helped her that evening, now seeming so remote, so buried in the abysses of time, when she had gone to the ball at the presidential mansion. Her mother, anxious, flustered, hovered in the background, a vague nonenity.

Vitoria meant diabolically to look her best. She chose, after some deliberation, a short-sleeved dress of wine-colored — or was it blood-colored? — silk. Then, with Dolores mumbling and crooning in her ear, she let down her long dark ruddy hair, coiled it in the Spanish style at the back of her head, and thrust into it a wide comb of amber four inches tall. Lastly she added some hardly necessary touches of cosmetics and stood off to gaze at herself in the mirror. The pride came surging back, the pride of beauty, the pride of life.

'God go with you, señorita,' said old Dolores, a little frightened by something in her mistress's expression.

'God has other affairs to-night!' Vitoria laughed.

Dolores, too, now crossed herself. 'It is when a woman is most beautiful that she has the greatest need of God's help, señorita, for man's help she cannot then expect.'

The purr of a motor car could be heard outside.

Vitoria went into the wide hall and kissed her mother, abstractedly, as she might have kissed an image. She did not kiss her father. She did not ever intend to kiss him again. He faltered, awed by the loveliness of this creature of his own veins.

'You will bring back good news?'

'Good news, father?' She did not mean to spare him anything. 'What good news is there to bring — that you do not already know?'

'He will be able to tell you what has been going on at the front. Perhaps he can tell you that some of the stories we have been hearing are not true. And surely he would not be dining with guests to-night if they were.'

Vitoria laughed. 'Oh, yes — the war. I had almost forgotten it. I shall ask his highness to tell me what it is all about. There must be some reason for killing so many men.'

With his unfailing sense of the proprieties the president had sent not only his aide-de-camp, but also the aide-de-camp's young wife to escort the guest of honor to the executive mansion. The woman felt for Vitoria's hand and took it in the darkness as the car started. For some inexplicable reason the touch did more than anything else to break down the hard surface of Vitoria's cynicism. But with her other hand she felt softly in her silver-mesh bag. The object she sought was there, together with her pocket mirror, her lipstick, her powder puff, all the little articles of emergency toilette. The touch of it steadied her.

They talked about the war, as every one in Santa Eulalia, with the possible exception of his highness the president, was doing that evening. As yet the news was vague. There had been a defeat. Two or three regiments had suffered badly. The list of dead and wounded would not be known for some days. Vitoria bit her lips until she tasted blood. Santa Eulalia would win the war in the end, said the captain, she always won her wars. He cursed his luck that he was not at the front — except for the fact, he added gallantly, that if he were at the front he would not be in such charming company. The other woman's hand tightened upon Vitoria's.

The car passed the Presidio, where a handful of superannuated veterans lounged and stared, crossed the plaza, and halted in front of the presidential mansion. Two sentries sprang to attention, a third ran to open the inner door. A functionary in buttons led them to the president's private apartment.

He rose ingratiatingly as they entered, his fat form encased in a well-fitting dress suit, his bosom crossed by a wide red sash and hung with medals and decorations. He first kissed Vitoria's hand, then that of the officer's wife.

'You must excuse the informality,' he began, in a tone as serious as though he expected to be believed, 'but her highness the señora, whom I had hoped would be our hostess to-night, has unfortunately been called to her home by — by the illness of her father. I shall, therefore, be obliged to do the honors myself in my poor way. This is the more

regrettable because Captain Macias has just been ordered to the front and I fear that Señora Macias, like all good wives under such circumstances, will wish to see that he takes with him enough handkerchiefs and clean linen. We men are too careless about those matters, señora. I had hoped that the captain and his charming señora would take supper with us. As that has been rendered impossible by this deplorable war, I shall anticipate their request to be excused.'

The captain's face revealed blank amazement. His wife's grasp tightened upon his arm and her brown, almost childlike eyes widened and widened. Vitoria was sure now of what she had guessed before. She touched Señora Macias's hand and whispered gently in her ear. 'He will come back,' she said, 'he will come back, and your little captain that is to be born will resemble him.'

'I had not known,' stammered the captain. 'However, if such are my orders I shall be only too happy to go.'

Vitoria heard Señora Macias weeping as the two went down the corridor. Poor simple creature! And lucky that she could weep.

'You manage these things well,' she said to the president.

'I lived in England for two years,' he explained, 'and after that in Paris. One learns.'

'The poor señora will die if anything happens to him.'

The president shrugged his shoulders. 'That

would be a pity. However, it is a risk she took in marrying into the military profession. We cannot keep our soldiers at home in times of danger for no other reason than that their wives will miss them.'

His greedy eyes were on her. His lips moved slightly as though his mouth were watering. She had the sensation of a flower that is being stripped petal by petal. But she was not afraid. She could no more be afraid than she could weep. A cold strength, inexhaustible, unyielding, sustained her. She regarded the whole world with ironical amusement. When she caught sight of herself in a tall mirror across the room, she was at first startled and pleased, for it seemed to her that she had never seen a lovelier woman. Then she smiled savagely. A fantastic creature, she thought, this Vitoria! As grotesque in her way as the president himself.

He had motioned her to sit down on a high-backed divan set against the wall. He pressed a button, then came and sat beside her, turning slightly toward her, with his two fat hands resting on the knee nearest her.

'I hope,' she said bitingly, 'your highness will not stand on ceremony. I am a very uninteresting guest, indeed, and you, with your responsibilities, must be tired.'

He leered gallantly. 'And could anything be more restful than the society of a charming lady?'

Two Japanese servants in white linen suits were bringing in a small table with covers already laid for

two persons. The president himself had introduced the Japanese into certain domestic positions in the executive mansion. They did not talk Spanish fluently, nor did they mingle frequently or intimately with the Eulalians. If state secrets were discussed in their presence, they were not likely to gossip about them in quarters where gossip could do harm. It was taken for granted that they reported regularly to the Japanese government upon the military and naval strength of Santa Eulalia, but the president had wisely reasoned that they would do this, anyway. And he was, except when actually at war, more concerned with domestic than with foreign relations.

'You are,' the president went on, 'the most interesting guest in the world, Señorita Soberanes. As for my responsibilities they make recreation all the more necessary. We public men grow weary of being on parade, señorita. We must have our informal moments.'

'But there will be time for suppers later — after the victory. I could even suggest another guest.'

'Ah, yes?'

She flung the words in his face arrogantly. 'Señor Gomez!'

There was a venomous sparkle in his highness's eyes. 'I shall be happy, in the event of his safe return. But in the mean time one must eat, one must drink. Do not let me hear any more of your going away. It is a pleasantry, I know, but I do not like that kind of pleasantry.'

'As you wish, your highness,' returned Vitoria. 'And perhaps you can tell me if there is any news concerning Señor Gomez. One is interested, you will understand, in one's — former friends.'

The president seemed to like the adjective. 'These colonels,' he answered, more cheerfully, 'are a little difficult to keep track of. It is even hard to know exactly what our generals are doing.' He leaned forward confidentially, in an attitude which the experiences of his official career had taught him was usually effective with women. 'The fact is we have experienced a slight reverse. You see, señorita, how much I trust you. I am telling you a secret I would not wish every one to know.'

'I am flattered, your highness.'

'But,' continued the president, 'there is really no cause for anxiety. As they advance they lengthen their lines of communication and the harder it will be for them to bring their full strength to bear. In the end they will walk into our trap and then they will run away again like rabbits. And as for your friend Señor Gomez, he shall run after them. If he runs fast enough we shall make him, if you wish, a general.'

'That would be amusing. I wish you would.'

'For one smile, señorita, I would do anything you asked.'

The Japanese had finished arranging the table. The president and Vitoria sat down and the first course was served. The president ate noisily, with his napkin tucked under his chin and covering part

of his bemedaled chest. At times he got out of breath. There were even moments when his attention seemed more centered on his food than on his companion.

Vitoria studied this heavy, dull, pompous organism with a feeling which resembled pity. But there was also puzzlement in her mind. Animals like this survived and flourished in the Santa Eulalian world, perhaps in that larger world of which she knew almost nothing. Consequently it appeared probable that God liked them, or He would not have arranged matters so much in their favor. Or did they merely amuse Him?

'You were very kind to him,' she resumed.

He looked up, half startled. 'Kind? To whom, señorita?'

'To my friend, Señor Gomez.' The devil in her had made her repeat the name again.

The president revealed his annoyance. 'That was nothing. It was a happiness — shall I be frank? — not so much on his account as on yours. I shall always be glad, señorita, to do favors for friends of yours. Provided' — he leaned across the table until Vitoria could see the tiny drops of sweat on his oily skin — 'provided they are not too good friends of yours.'

'And how should you know?'

The president placed his hand on his left side, a little above his liver. 'By the heart, señorita.' He took another drink of wine. His eyes were growing glassier.

'And if your heart said that their friendship was more than I deserved?'

'Not more than you deserve, señorita. That could never be. But more than your humble admirer could endure. We have our weaknesses, señorita, even we public men who have in an official way to place ourselves above human passions. We are capable, I admit it, of jealousy.'

'And what would jealousy make you do?'

'How can any man tell what he would do under circumstances that he hopes will never arise? But let me tell you this, señorita. You will be sympathetic because I think you, like other women, are fond of strength and determination in a man. I am a person of strong will power or I should not now be in the position I occupy. You are too young and too inexperienced to know all that I have had to go through. I am not of aristocratic birth. I fought my way up, a step at a time, out of the ranks. Once I was a private in the army. Now I give orders to the commander-in-chief.'

'Once I heard you give such an order,' said Vitoria.

'Yes.' He eyed her suspiciously. 'Yes, I remember. And he obeyed. It has been that way with others. I have had to be brutal. I have had to say to myself, if any one gets in my way I will remove him. No matter what I have wanted, whether it was an office or a woman, I have lived up to that rule. Let us suppose, now, that I worship a woman, yourself, for instance. Let us suppose that this wo-

man has a friend, Señor Gomez, for instance. Let us suppose that this Señor Gomez is willing, as he has in fact shown himself to be, to surrender whatever claims he may have to this woman that may interfere with my claims. Then nothing happens. He prospers. He may go as far as he likes. I am his patron. I look after his interests.'

'It's a lie!' cried Vitoria, surprising even herself. 'He didn't. He didn't surrender any — claims.'

'You are mistaken, señorita. You see, he read your letter. Then he said, I have no longer any quarrel with you.'

'How did he say it? What did he do?'

'He said it with commendable calmness, señorita. Then he tore your letter into small pieces and threw them on the floor. But suppose he had been less sensible.'

'Suppose.' And now she could have wept had it not been for that terrible pride. 'Suppose he had believed in my loyalty despite my foolish words.'

'But that is no way of putting it, señorita. It is not that he did not believe in your loyalty. It was for him to be loyal. And how could he be loyal if he did not consider your best interests, and how could he consider your best interests if he were not willing to step aside when — if you will pardon me — a better opportunity offered. Then, also his own career was at stake. Much depends, señorita, on how a young man starts out in life. He must be ready to fight, as I was, but he must also be ready to make the proper kind of friends, by which I mean

friends in positions of influence and authority. Suppose he had not been ready. Well, that would have been a different story.'

'You would have killed him!'

The president smiled deprecatingly. 'Is it necessary to use such strong words? I should not put it in quite that way. I should say that if Señor Gomez had been unwilling to defer to the wishes of the administration in one respect, he might have been equally reluctant in other respects. In that case we might have been compelled, much against our wishes, to act with severity. The first duty of a government, you must understand, is to preserve itself.'

'That seems also to be the first duty of snakes — and pigs!'

Vitoria's last word went home to a spot already sore. The president rose halfway to his feet. His face became a deeper crimson. 'Take care, señorita,' he cried. 'Remember, I have made no promises.'

Vitoria opened her eyes innocently wide. 'You have taken my words too personally, your highness. I was merely trying to understand. We women, you see, are not used to politics.'

The president continued to look at her suspiciously. 'It seems to me, señorita,' he said at last, 'that you are playing a little game with me. That is dangerous — to you and your father, perhaps, but especially to Señor Gomez.'

'You are sure, your highness, that you are not playing a game yourself?'

'No, señorita. I am frank with you. There is but one thing that I want. What that thing is you know.' The president's utterances were becoming thicker. The Japanese servants, impassive as idols, were removing the final course. One of them placed conveniently near the president's elbow a tray of glasses, a bottle of cognac, two bottles of liqueurs. Vitoria drank a glass of Bénédictine, then another. Earlier in the evening she had taken a little wine. Her head remained clear. If she liked, she thought, she would be able to drink this sordid beast under the table. However, she refused the cognac for the present.

'And if I do not give this thing to you that you desire?' She smiled with deliberate provocation.

'If you refuse I shall not blame you, for I know that yours is a generous nature. I shall have to blame Señor Gomez. And if I blame Señor Gomez — well, we are at war. We cannot have intrigues against the government. We have had rumors to-day which may call for stern action. Those who are not for us — for their country — heart and soul — are against us. We can have no — no hyphenates.'

'And if I consent?'

'Your action will convince me not only of your own sincerity, but of that of Señor Gomez.'

'Very well, I consent.'

His face beamed with unaffected and childish delight. He took out a great purple handkerchief, wiped his face and mouth, and got up to come toward her.

She motioned him back. 'Sit down, your highness. I have a word or two to say first. You will understand that for some women the distinction you are about to confer upon me might have its darker side. There is an old-fashioned tradition, of which you have heard, which defines in certain narrow terms the honor of women. And there are those in Santa Eulalia who will say that I have dishonored myself by granting your request, even though you are the president. Two weeks ago I myself might have agreed with them. But in two weeks — no, in less than one week — I have learned much.'

'You speak like the most sensible of women, señorita. We are getting on famously.' The president helped himself to another drink of cognac.

'There is, however, still more to say.' Vitoria hesitated. Her lips were dry. 'I'll take some cognac, too,' she said. He handed it to her. She drank about half and put the glass down. The burning drops gave her strength. 'I would not want you to gain a wrong impression of my attitude toward you. When I was a little girl I sometimes played in the mud beside the brook and got my frocks dirty. That made trouble for Dolores, but after all it was always possible to wash the mud off. I think that much that the world calls mud is like that — it will wash off. It does not change the soul. Before Rafael went away I said to him, I would sell my body if by so doing I could save him. And I knew that if I sold my body for that reason I should still be as pure as I had been before. Purer, perhaps, for I should have

done a courageous thing; I should have been cleansed by sacrifice. And so, no matter what happens to-night, I shall not be ashamed.'

'Then there is no more to say?' The president was getting up again. His fat fingers twitched. 'You are the loveliest woman in the whole world, señorita. We are quite alone. Even the servants have orders not to disturb us any more. We shall not be interrupted.'

Again she motioned him back. Mechanically he took a drink of cognac. She picked up her own glass and drained what was left. 'No, there is a little more to say. You need not be anxious. There will be plenty of time for what you desire. What I wish you to understand is this, that I am giving you my body as part of the bargain we have made, but I am not giving you my soul. My body could be made clean again, my soul could not. So shall I tell you what you are before you begin to make love to me?'

The president was shrinking, as though from an expected blow in the face.

Vitoria went on, gathering composure as she spoke. Never in her life had she felt herself so strong, so cool, so intently focused upon the task in hand.

'You are a beast, a small-eyed, fat-faced, fat-souled, ugly, stupid little beast. You have become president by licking the boots of those of whom you were afraid, by butchering those who were unable to fight back, by lying, by sneaking, by being meaner and viler than your rivals. You have been endured because the ordinary people of Santa Eulalia do not

care who is president so long as they are allowed to eat, drink, and sleep, and do not have to work too much. Or perhaps it is because, like a clown on carnival day, you are amusing. You are a balloon with an absurd face painted on it, and puffed full of gas. You are a beetle, a donkey, a hippopotamus.'

The president's face was purple, but only inarticulate sounds issued from it. For the moment he was thoroughly cowed.

'Do you think,' continued Vitoria, 'that I am insulting you? I am not. I am only holding up the mirror to you.'

On a swift impulse she ran across the room to where the silver handbag lay on the couch, and took from it her pocket mirror. As she did so another object in the handbag caught her eye. She took this object out and laid it on the table. Then she ran to his highness's chair, and thrust the glass at him so that he could not help staring into it.

'Look!' she cried. 'Look at the president's face! Look at the defender of the people's liberties! Look at the government, look at the law, look at the justice of Santa Eulalia! What do you see? A pig. Pig eyes. Pig mouth. A stupid pig. You can't deny it, you can't shut your eyes to it, it's there. That animal, that filthy beast, is you just as truly as I, Vitoria Soberanes, am what I am. You think me beautiful. I am! And I think you loathsome. Look at me.' She whirled about wildly, in a mad fandango. 'What harm can you do to me, O pig! What marks can your hoofs leave that soap and water will

not wash off?' She paused. 'That is all. I am ready. Come and take me.' She waited, her hands clasped in front of her, a dangerous meekness in her eyes.

The president had got to his feet. He tottered and had to put one hand on the table, with its bottles and glasses, in order to support himself. It was hard to tell whether it was hate or lust that was uppermost in his expression. For him, perhaps, the two were at the moment the same thing. He began to produce words. 'You shall pay for this, señorita.'

'Did I not say I was ready?' She blazed with scorn.

He smiled craftily. 'You shall pay in more ways than one. I had been keeping a little surprise for you. I had intended to tell it to you — afterwards. I was afraid it might spoil the pleasure of our evening if I told it to you too soon.' He began coming toward her, half man, half animal, an obscene delight illuminating his purple features. He wavered, but somehow kept his feet. 'Your Señor Gomez is dead. Do you understand? Dead. Did you think I spared him for your sake? You were mistaken — it was for the sake of his father the canon. Now it is I that am strong, it is the canon who must guard himself. And this morning I sent word to General Hernandez to have your Señor Gomez, your lover, the canon's son, taken out and shot, like the traitor that he was. I explained, dear señorita, that he had plotted with the canon against us both. Hernandez

is prompt. He is dead, your handsome lover. Think of him, think of him! In a ditch, all bloody, dead!'

Vitoria had not moved. Rafael dead. Rafael with bullets in his breast. Rafael unable to speak to her, ever again, unable to take her in his arms, blind to her beauty. She forgot that she had surrendered him. She no longer saw the president, who was still coming unsteadily toward her. She no longer saw the room in which she stood. Rafael — dead! There was no other fact in the universe. It was as though the whole world had caved in upon her, as though she were buried under the agony of a universe. She retreated slowly, not to escape the president's advance across the room, but in vain struggle to avoid this crushing, stupefying weight.

She heard her own voice speaking, frigidly cool. 'Don't come any nearer.'

He did not stop. 'You shall pay,' he kept on saying. 'You shall pay.'

'I have paid!' She drew back step by step until she came to the couch upon which lay her open silver handbag and that other object which she had taken from it. She now took up this other object in her right hand. It had a silver hilt, and though it was small it was perhaps not too small. The president seemed not to notice. 'I have paid!' she cried again. 'What is there for me to be afraid of now? Why should I deal with you any longer, mountain of filth?'

He hovered upon his unsteady legs, and a smile, an imbecilic leer, modified his previous intent expres-

sion. 'The time for bargaining is past, señorita. What I want I now intend to take. It is my habit. As I have told you we are alone. What is there for you to do?'

Her hand flew out with a dance of silver light. 'This, you vileness, this!'

And now it was his turn to pause and retreat. His gaze slid from side to side, in search of some weapon, perhaps, perhaps only to avoid her own blazing eyes. Vitoria felt her strength slipping away. In another instant she would scream, faint, fall. The president seemed suddenly aware of this insidious weakness. He breathed a little more easily. He was ready, she could see that, to spring upon her, wrest away the dagger, do his triumphant will.

But he took one more backward step. The table, loaded with bottles and glasses, crashed to the floor. The sound let loose simultaneously the tense springs of action in each of them. He held her crushed into his arms, she smelt his foul breath, the odor of perspiration. She got her right hand free and stabbed and stabbed and stabbed.

XII

Had the Tolosano army followed up its victory at Santa Clara, the history of Santa Eulalia, perhaps even of all Latin America, might have been different. Such, at least, was the opinion subsequently expressed by several profound students of the subject, and as the event whose effects they described did not actually take place, no one was able to prove them wrong. But armies have a habit of not following up their victories, a habit so strong that the few generals who have taken the trouble to run very far and very fast after a demoralized enemy have rendered themselves immortal.

There are several reasons for the failure of the Tolosanos to smash the main body of the Santa Eulalian army on Thursday night and reach Santa Eulalia itself not later than Friday afternoon. One was that there was much plundering still to be done, as the looting of the countryside had been interrupted at its most interesting stage by the approach of General Hernandez's forces. Another was that it was necessary to repair the railway tracks. A third was that the soldiers were tired. A fourth was that they were also drunk. A fifth was that the Tolosano general, like many other famous commanders, was so surprised by his own success that he did not know what to do. There were other reasons for the relative military inactivity of the Tolosanos on Thurs-

day night, and all of them combined turned out fortunately for the Eulalian army, if not precisely for General Hernandez.

They also turned out fortunately for Rafael and Domingo, who found, after two hours of painful crawling, that they had left the Tolosanos in their rear. A little later the Eulalian army began to manifest itself. It was making a frightful amount of noise, of a sort not commonly associated with a well-behaved army. The defenders of Santa Eulalia were engaged at that moment, to tell the truth, in doing what every army has at one time or another longed to do since modern warfare was brought to its present admirable stage of perfection; they were getting even with the Brass Hats.

This tragic and painfully human incident was later attributed to a conspiracy of long standing hatched at secret meetings in the shop of Domingo, the former shoemaker. But in spite of the fact that Domingo took control of the movement, its origins were at once more simple and more complicated — simple in the sense that the boiling over of a pot of milk is simple, complicated in the sense that even a chemist may find mysteries in the same commonplace phenomenon. There were many reasons why the Eulalian army was not happy. It had been beaten and forced to retreat, which was bad for its morale. It had lost confidence in its commanders. It suspected that some economical manufacturer had put sand instead of powder into its cartridges. It had not had enough to eat. It also contained a

number of unreasonable individuals who did not want to be in the army at all.

A committee of private soldiers, early Friday morning, went to one of the captains with their empty mess-kits and explained that they were hungry. The captain retorted that it was a soldier's duty to eat when food was given him and to say nothing when it was not. The committee doggedly insisted that they were still hungry. The captain, by way of teaching better manners, drew his revolver and shot a committeeman in the intestines. The survivors of the committee then killed the captain as thoroughly as they could. The spark of revolt spread like fire in a powder mill. The whole camp seemed to blow up at once. Some officers resisted and were shot down. Others tore off their insignia and mingled with the mob.

General Hernandez was engaged at the critical moment, after a hearty repast of eggs, fruit, and a kind of guava jelly of which he was inordinately fond, in laying out his plan of battle. He was worried, but not desperate. It might be necessary to sacrifice a regiment or two in order to get through the day, but General Hernandez did not mind sacrificing regiments in a good cause. With reasonable luck he should be able to hold out until morning, and morning should bring the airplane and the machine guns. On the whole the campaign had not gone badly for his plans. Yesterday's disaster would not be generally known in Santa Eulalia until he had retrieved it with a victory. He could then point

out that the defeat had been due to errors in the president's diplomacy, whereas the victory was the result of his, General Hernandez's, Napoleonic qualities. After that there would be a new president. Nothing could be simpler.

These pleasant reflections were interrupted. The general's first thought was that the Tolosanos had made a surprise attack. His second, which turned out to be correct, was that his army had mutinied. He had been in battles enough and possessed his share of courage, but the sounds which he now heard chilled him to the marrow. He sprang to the door of the railway coach which formed his headquarters and made a rapid survey of the situation. The coach itself could not be hauled out of danger, for the locomotive to which it was attached did not have steam up. But an automobile had come up that morning from Santa Eulalia with a communication from the president. The general ran toward it, two members of his staff with him. He pressed the self-starter, the engine coughed, turned over a few times, and died. There happened to be no gasoline in the tank. Had some one purposely drained his precious fluid? The general never knew.

The mutineers were coming on the run, shooting as they came. The general straightened himself up and looked at his hands. He had picked up some grease from the mechanism, and he now took out his handkerchief and wiped his fingers clean. Then he buttoned the top button of his tunic, pulled his hat well down over his eyes, and walked slowly

back to the coach. His two companions, running for their lives, were shot down before he reached the steps. The general was still unharmed, for the rioters found it easier to shoot at men who were running away than at one who was walking calmly toward them. But he could not mount the steps without turning his back on his enemies. He stopped, turned round and faced them.

He took out his watch. 'You have five minutes to disperse and return to your duties. If you have not done so at the end of that time, I will have you shot.'

Such were Hernandez's last words. His arrogance appalled those in front. It was some one well to the rear who fired the shot that brought him down upon his face. Then every one was shooting at once. The general had thought to win something splendid and spectacular out of life; there, in the shadow of the railway car, with the sun coming up brilliantly behind, it became apparent that he would not.

Domingo and Rafael walked quietly into a mob of three thousand men milling about in wild confusion. Some precipitant, some chemical reagent, was needed at this precise moment to reduce a hundred chaotic elements to order. Domingo and Rafael unwittingly furnished it. They had hardly time to recover from their first surprise at what was going on when they found themselves the center of attention. It was not until they looked at each other and saw themselves half-naked, bloody, torn with briars, and covered thick with dust that they realized the cause. They and a few other tattered

stragglers who had been making their way into camp since daybreak were all that were left of the regiments which had led yesterday's charge. They were the living symbols of a sacrifice to tyranny and incompetence. They were the living justification of the deeds of blood which the mutineers had just committed.

Some one in the crowd, no one ever knew who, recognized Domingo and began to shout his name. Other voices took it up. The two were pushed back against a flatcar, and might have been crushed by the pressure of those who were trying to shake their hands if they had not managed to scramble up above the heads of their too eager friends. Rafael found himself looking into hundreds of frantic faces. The moment was tense, electric.

'Domingo!' The name was running like wildfire. Men were shouting it, though they did not know what it signified. 'Domingo! Viva Domingo!'

The shoemaker blinked. He was not abashed, but he was astonished.

Suddenly Rafael saw, clear as a lightning flash, what a prodigous power was concentrated on this spot, and how easy it would be to concentrate it and hurl it — at the Tolosanos, at the president. These men wanted a leader. That leader could not be himself. But here was Domingo, the fighter, the philosopher, whose shrewd eyes looked so steadily upon a world in which most men lost their way. He had seen Domingo in yesterday's battle. He knew what mastery resided in him.

He put both hands on his friend's shoulders. 'Domingo!' he cried. 'Speak to them. They will follow you.'

'They are sheep,' said Domingo. 'They will follow anybody.' But Rafael saw the fire glow and blaze in his eyes as the idea took hold of him.

A grizzled sergeant held up a hand and shouted in a tone that carried to the very outskirts of the crowd. 'Domingo! Let him talk.'

'What about the other one?' demanded a hoarse voice. 'What about the little one? Is he not one of Hernandez's little rats?'

The sergeant climbed to the car and shook a clenched fist. 'Down, son of a she dog! If he is with Domingo, that is enough. He is not one of those perfumed ladies in pantaloons who send other and better soldiers where they dare not go themselves. Is it not so, Domingo, viejo camarada?'

Domingo had seized his hand and was shaking it with tremendous enthusiasm. 'It is Enriquez!' he bellowed. 'Enriquez, camarada! We have not met since we were together at the taking of Ciudad Diego. Where have you been all these years, sweet cut-throat?'

'A vaquero, my beloved thief of women's virtue.'

'And I, O cherished hijo de la puta, a shoemaker. You have had the better of it, my blear-eyed ladron.'

The two old men clapped hands on each other's shoulders and fairly wept for joy.

Enriquez turned to the crowd and waved an elo-

quent fist. 'A veteran of the old wars! Behold a veteran of the old wars when Santa Eulalia was free! A soldier and a friend of the common people. Let him speak. Let him tell us what to do.'

Domingo's eyes were burning coals. The years fell away from him. Again he was what he had been when he rode, lithe and young and lustful, in the merry days when Ciudad Diego was besieged and Santa Eulalia was free.

'We come from battle!' Rafael was surprised at the great boom of his voice. 'We come from a battle in which better men than ourselves died for the freedom and honor of Santa Eulalia. They were none the less heroes because their lives were thrown away needlessly by tyrants and fools.'

A thunder of applause shook the hillside. Men were running from all directions. Those who could not hear shouted as loudly as those who could. The sergeant held up his hand. Domingo resumed.

'We are attacked on two sides — by the Tolosanos on the east, by Santa Eulalia traitors and usurpers on the west. We must defend ourselves on both fronts. We must beat them both.'

There was a swirl in the crowd at a little distance from the car and a voice more violent than Domingo's made itself audible.

'That voice,' said Enriquez, 'sounds familiar. There are few such voices nowadays. It is the bellowing of one of Tecera's old sergeants. I cannot remember his name, but I remember, as though it were yesterday, the way in which he swallows his

words, and then, as though a cartridge had exploded inside of him, spits them out again.'

Domingo nodded. 'You are right. I know him, name and all. We have eaten out of the same dirty pot and fought over the same woman. We have lain in a ditch together with bullets dropping all around us. In short, it is Perez.'

'Perez!' Enriquez roared with laughter. 'Perez the bag of wind. Perez who could argue a queen out of her virtue if she would give him time. Shall we listen?'

Domingo spat. 'Is there anything else to do when Perez desires to talk?'

'Why should we fight the Tolosanos?' It was Perez who had the floor now. 'All men are brothers. We must wipe out boundaries. We must fight only the capitalists. We must take Santa Eulalia. We must pull down the cathedral, make all the rich people go to work and divide up their property. The workers shall rule.'

The cheers were uproarious. To Rafael it seemed that Domingo's hour had come and gone. But now Domingo leaned over the edge of the car and pointed a stubby finger.

'Perez!' he shouted. 'Sergeant Perez! Here are your old friends, your fellow campaigners, your partners in wickedness, with whom you have robbed hen-roosts and ravished women in the days gone by. Since when have you turned against your ancient comrades? We are three. Climb down off your rock and join us, and we shall be masters of the world.'

Perez was arrested in the middle of a sentence. He was a short, broad-shouldered man with a ferocious mustache and close-cropped gray hair, bare to the sun. His face looked like an old boot. His mouth had the wideness and looseness of the confirmed orator's.

He shook his fist. 'No!' he cried. 'I do not know you if you come as a friend of the bourgeoisie. We know only the proletariat here. We want no more generals, no more tyrants.'

'You mean, my old horsethief, that you wish to be the tyrant yourself. There shall be no more generals in Santa Eulalia, but you shall be the top sergeant. There shall be none but commoners, but you shall be the commoner who gives the orders. There shall be no more tyrants, but those who do not do what you say shall be shot.'

Some one laughed. With that guffaw, instantly, the control of the crowd went back to Domingo. Rafael breathed more easily. Domingo picked up his own words without giving Perez time to answer.

'We are all comrades here. Call us what you like, it is not the name that matters. If my old friend Perez wishes to make peace with the Tolosanos, let him do so. I did my best to make peace yesterday, and so did those others who now lie dead in front of Santa Clara, but perhaps Sergeant Perez knows a better way. If he does let him try it. The way is open. Let him walk into their lines and tell them that they are, as he says, our brothers. Then let him see if they will go home without asking our territory

or our money. As to dividing up the money of the rich, let us wait until we have taken Santa Eulalia and have the money to divide. As to tearing down the cathedral, let us remember that it throws a pleasant shadow across the plaza on hot summer days. As to making idlers go to work, let us bear in mind that that is a bad example to set. I have a better plan. Let nobody work at all.'

There was, as he spoke, a dull roar from the direction of Nueva Tolosa. Every one's eyes turned eastward. The earth and sand a few hundred yards down the railway track suddenly rose in a dark cloud and there was a detonation which shook the whole hillside. Domingo threw up his clenched fists.

'There is your peace!' he cried, 'There are your Tolosano brothers. Go and join them if you will. As for me, I mean to kill as many of them as I can before they kill me.' He changed his tone abruptly. 'Pass that man up here! Pass up Sergeant Perez!' Willing hands thrust the orator toward the front and boosted him to the platform of the car, where he stood for a moment glowering, sullen, unsubdued. Then Domingo suddenly took him by the hand. 'Camarada!' said he, 'let us be young again as we were when we three helped Tecera take Ciudad Diego. Let us have one more battle before we die, one more battle in which we shall ask neither questions nor quarter. They will be on us in an hour or two. We must stand them off, or there will be a Tolosano, and a bourgeois to boot, governing in Santa Eulalia. To win we must remain an army.

Return to your companies, let your sergeants take command, and elect new officers to take the places of those who betrayed you. Show the world what an army commanded by sergeants can do. We have no need any longer of corseted and perfumed dolls.'

'Viva los sargentos!'

The throng began to break up into smaller groups. Domingo the shoemaker was from that moment, in fact if not in name, generalisimo of the armies of Santa Eulalia.

Perez again took his comrade's hand. One could see by his eyes that he was completely tamed. 'This is what we dreamed of in the old days, my violent one. The sergeants at last shall come into their own. There shall be no officers higher than sergeants in the whole army. No, nor in the government, either. Nobody shall give any orders that he cannot himself enforce, like a good sergeant, with his fists. There shall be no more epaulets, no more silk hats. Every one shall go barefooted.'

Domingo shook his head with an ironical smile. 'Would you ruin my business, Perez, unwashed offspring of the gutter? There must be shoes or all the shoemakers will starve. So it goes with all men. Such is the way of the world. I would make all men brothers if I could, beloved partner of my days of sin. But in the end we shall not change Santa Eulalia very much. The best we can do is not to kill more men than we can help. And that is not a plan we can follow at present.'

'You shall be president!' cried Rafael fiercely.

'You shall take the place of that stinking pig who has made a sty of the palace. I have not longed to live until this moment. But I shall live for that.'

Domingo took him fondly by the shoulder. 'Ah, Rafael,' he said sadly, 'you may succeed in inflating me, though I shall be a poor balloon at best. I am not stupid enough to make a ruler that men will admire. I shall laugh at myself for my own follies. I shall strut and swagger, but all the time something inside of me will be saying, "You clown, you fool, you had much better have remained a good shoemaker and let the imbeciles and the maniacs, who are not clever enough to make shoes, rule the world." For it is all madness, my Rafaelito. All these great things that men do — their wars, their ambitions — all is madness. Santa Eulalia is a madhouse. The world is but a larger madhouse. All that you have seen this week, and are to see, is pure madness, and you have seen, mark well what I say, the world in little.'

Perez nodded solemnly, but Enriquez's hard gray eyes twinkled beside his large red nose. 'It was always so with you, Domingo. There was nothing on this earth that you took seriously.'

Domingo shook his head. 'How can I tell which part of me is serious and which is not? What I say is one thing, what I do is another. I look out upon this slope, I see men running about like ants. But what am I planning? Why, to be another ant, a little bigger, if possible, than the rest. I shall beat the Tolosanos because, not being a general, I have

not learned things about war that are not so. I am better than a general, I am a good sergeant, as you well know, my twin incendiaries. I shall topple over the government of Santa Eulalia as a man kicks a dog out of his way — a dog with no teeth, that cannot bite. In the end some one else will kick me out of the way in my turn. I see it all clearly. Yet I mean to go through with it. And all the time something within me, perhaps the real Domingo, will sit in the door of a cobbler's shop in the sun, and laugh — ah, how that Domingo will laugh at the poor simpering stuffed clown who calls himself by the same name!'

Having rid himself of this much philosophy, Domingo got to his feet with an air of decision. 'Now, then, we must act. As soon as the sheep have chosen new dogs to hound them, new shepherds to pull their wool or turn them into mutton, we must have a council of war. I shall be made generalisimo, you, my Enriquez, shall be second in command, and you, my dear Rafaelito, shall be chief of staff, drum major, quartermaster-general, brigadier-general, adjutant-general, or whatever you like to call yourself.'

'I shall call myself your friend,' returned Rafael. 'I shall not need another title.'

There was tenderness in Domingo's eagle eyes. 'Ever the dreamer!' he cried. 'But, take care, I may play you false. If you are to go far, you must not put your trust in anybody — not even in me. For once I begin this march upon which you have urged

me, I shall not let any one bar my path, not even you.'

'I have no fear,' answered Rafael.

Domingo sighed. 'Then I am a bad teacher, and all my philosophy has been wasted on you.' He turned to Perez. 'And you, Perez? There are a few titles left. What would you like to be?'

'I had hoped,' returned Perez, 'to be generalisimo. I now see that this is impossible. If I cannot be the generalisimo, however, I should like to remain a sergeant. But I should like to outrank all other sergeants.'

Domingo thumped him lustily on the shoulder blade. 'It shall be as you say, my venerable grave-robber. You have perhaps chosen more wisely than the rest of us, for if the revolution fails, they will surely shoot all of these who have taken high-sounding titles, but they will save the sergeants in order to keep the army together.'

The newly chosen officers from the mutinous regiments were already assembling, and Rafael saw with pride and amazement how swiftly and decisively his old friend took charge. The council of war was such only in name. Domingo was issuing orders, not listening to opinions. No one seemed any longer to question his authority. The army of Santa Eulalia, having rid itself of one master, had acquired another. Soon the bugles began to blow all along the line, and then Rafael saw how absurdly simple the plan of battle was to be. Domingo was drawing back into the pass of San Gregorio and oc-

cupying the heights on either side. To these elevations such cannon as the Santa Eulalians had were being dragged.

'It is as easy as mending a shoe,' said Domingo to Rafael. 'It is even simpler, for to mend a shoe properly requires training, whereas laying out a battle needs only the sense one is born with. My object can be expressed in a phrase — to put my men in a position where they can shoot without being shot.'

There was but one hitch in Domingo's reasoning. The Tolosanos' Big Bertha appeared to be at last in fine working order. Keeping close to the line of the railway track, the Englishman was placing his hits with an accuracy which showed not only a mastery of the science of ballistics, but also a thorough knowledge of the natural and artificial features of the terrain. Several cars were blown up, and with them a number of men. But Domingo viewed this episode with no more than a mild annoyance.

'They will kill a few of us,' he explained, as he swung down from his comfortable perch on the flat-car and moved toward the protection of some jutting rocks on the north side of the pass, 'but they will also spoil their own highway. If they had not torn up the track with their gun, we should have had to do it with picks and shovels, which would be much harder work.'

He rolled and lit a cigarette and sat thoughtfully smoking. Perez and Enriquez had gone off to take charge of operations, one on either hill.

'A good general,' Domingo observed, 'never has much to do. As I sit here, out of harm's way, and smoke, everything is being attended to. The Tolosanos will come when they are ready. Meanwhile I am patient.'

The Eulalian guns on the hills suddenly opened fire. Taking into account the deficiencies of their equipment and their second-hand ammunition, they made quite a respectable noise. Domingo continued to smoke, rolling cigarette after cigarette with the steadiest of hands in the neatest manner imaginable. But he was growing restless.

'I am not so good a general as I thought I was,' he said at last. 'As a general it is my duty to sit here quietly until the battle is over and then collect the glory bought with other men's blood. But as a sergeant who passed the best days of his youth fighting under Tecera and who still likes fighting better than any other amusement except making love to pretty women, I find it impossible to remain under my rock.'

He got up and they climbed a steep slope of sand and loose boulders. As they did so they heard the machine guns posted lower down the hill come into action. The sullen occasional boom of the Englishman's beloved mechanism now had an overtone which increased in violence and variety with every passing moment. Things whined in the air. Chips of rock flew up under invisible hammers.

Domingo tossed up his arms with a great shout, so that at first Rafael believed he had been hit. But

if he had been, it was with no spray of lead, but with the memory of his savagely happy younger days. This spray of lead and rock was his fountain of youth. The mock philosophy of his older years was forgotten. He gripped Rafael's shoulder with a hand of steel. 'Live, my Rafaelito!' he cried. 'Smell powder smoke and live forever!' And he ran up the hill with such a furious pace that it was all Rafael could do to keep up with him.

They gained the summit a few moments later. The plains stretched before them eastward toward the misty summits that veiled Eulalia Irredenta. A mile or so away a lazy puff of smoke indicated the slow advance of the locomotive which was pushing the Englishman's gun. The broken country in between seemed at first curiously vacant. Then Rafael saw that extending for at least a mile in depth, and perhaps a mile in breadth, there was an area of intense activity immediately in front of the Santa Eulalian position. It was not that this arena was black with men, for the Tolosanos had spread right and left under the fire which received their first rush, and were taking advantage of every scrap of cover there was. But they were not stationary. Rafael seized a pair of field glasses which were held out to him and discovered that every gully and every bush concealed its crawling figures. Turning the glass toward the base of the hill, he could gaze into the front lines of the Eulalians, which were likewise sheltered behind rocks, bushes and improvised trenches. The Eulalians were lying, crouching,

kneeling, according to the nature of their cover, and firing with rifles and machine guns. Behind the front lines lay the reserves, ready to come into action. Higher yet were the heavier guns. On the other side of the hill the arrangement seemed to be the same. And every slope was sprayed from top to bottom with intermittent streams of lead.

Domingo shouted in Rafael's ear and pointed. His eyes glittered horribly, his voice was audible above the guns. 'There is the greatest fiesta of all, my Rafaelito. The fandango of death, amigo mio! You shall never see anything like it in the plaza in Santa Eulalia. And it is I, Domingo the shoemaker, who am leading the orchestra!'

The firing was slackening. The Tolosano attack was slowing down. Rafael turned inquiringly toward his friend. Domingo's excitement had now passed its pitch. One could almost see the fires die.

'They have had their stomachs full for to-day,' he said slowly. 'Poor devils! Poor devils, all of us! Perhaps Perez was right. Perhaps there are Tolosanos also who say that all men are brothers. I might have saved all this if I had let Perez go forward with a white flag.' He sighed and his face was extraordinarily sorrowful. 'But I am a soldier. I was too old to learn new tricks. It had to be.'

'It is too late now,' replied Rafael. 'Both sides have had their taste of blood. Will they attack to-night, do you think?'

Domingo was the soldier again. He shut one eye shrewdly. 'No. They will wait till morning. If we

can then get the machine guns and the airplanes which I have learned should reach the city to-morrow, we shall be able to beat them. Just how we are to get them is another question. The president may have his own uses for them, and we may have to read him a lesson in manners.'

Rafael mentioned Mr. Harris, who by a strange coincidence was at this precise moment crawling up the hill behind them — dirty, sweating, hatless, frightened, yet carried forward by an indomitable purpose.

XIII

WHETHER Mr. Harris was motivated chiefly by the icy ambition for a career which had first brought him to Santa Eulalia, or by a disinterested yearning to add to the happiness of the human race, and particularly of that benighted fraction of the human race which dwelt in ignoble contentment in beautiful Santa Eulalia, or by a mean desire to avenge the perfidy of Antonia and the president — these are questions which only a Viennese psychologist could have unraveled. And though there were several proficient practical psychologists in Santa Eulalia — the canon, for example, could certainly be classed as such — there were none who paid much attention to theory. The important fact about Mr. Harris at this moment was, however, that he was now a man with but a single thought. It was a thought which, whatever its origin and composition, boded no good to his highness the president. It was not, he would have said, that he hated the president. He had simply come to see in how many ways that eminent man stood in the path of human progress, and especially of the progress of that fraction of humanity known as Mr. Harris. If subsequent events and disclosures revealed a certain ironic superfluity in Mr. Harris's preoccupation, it was hardly his fault. He could not see through the doors of the president's inner room. He had to act by such light as he had.

He had given certain directions to the captain of the Lady Anne. The captain, answering by wireless, had expressed his acquiescence, though under protest. He had to acquiesce because it was Mr. Harris's company, eager to develop the natural resources of Santa Eulalia, which had financed the purchase of his cargo, and because it was technically understood that in this matter Mr. Harris was speaking for the Santa Eulalian democracy. For the president was the choice of the people and Mr. Harris was the valued adviser of the president. It now occurred to Mr. Harris that, since he could no longer communicate with the Lady Anne, it might be well for him to get in touch with the commander of the Eulalian army at the front. He did not want to undertake this errand in person, for, though he realized the inevitability of war in the abstract, he did not care to have anything to do with it in the concrete. But as he could trust no messenger, he got out the rickety Ford car which he kept in the city's one garage and set forth.

Santa Eulalia had no good roads, but the highway which paralleled the railway track in the direction of San Gregorio Pass was not so bad as some of the others. It had been built partly for military purposes, and like other sensible governments that of Santa Eulalia believed that a highway destined to be used once in twenty years for war was of far more importance than one which was merely used every day for carrying cabbages.

Mr. Harris made fast time. In half an hour he had

rolled over so many little brown hills and through so many little passes that he could no longer, as he looked back, see the slightest traces of the city he had left. It had all vanished, cathedral tower and all.

By and by Mr. Harris began to hear somebody rolling bowls down an alley ten miles long and knocking over pins as tall as mountains. A part of him yearned to turn back, but the other part urged him on. He even increased his speed. The car rocked violently as he tore down stretches of straight road and whirled with hardly any slowing down around abrupt curves.

He entered into the final range of hills which separated the coastal slopes from the interior plain. The noise grew louder and more complicated. He could distinguish the heavy booming of large guns, with one, a kind of biggest-bullfrog gun, which outboomed the rest. These were the bass notes of the symphony of battle. The treble notes rippled and crashed continuously beneath them. People were trying to kill one another not far off, and probably succeeding, too.

'Good God!' thought Mr. Harris. 'What am I doing here?' But he kept on.

He rounded a final turn in the canyon and the battle burst upon him as though it had been a wind blowing round a corner. He hailed with a jerk of the brakes and immediately a dozen soldiers in the Eulalian apology for a uniform swarmed into the road and pointed their rifles menacingly at him.

They seemed to be on the point of firing. He threw up his hands.

'Don't shoot!' he cried. 'Don't shoot! Amigo! Viva Santa Eulalia! Viva Hernandez!'

At this some one hit him carelessly on the right shoulder with the butt of a rifle and he was dragged out of the car.

He gasped out a new appeal. 'Americano! If you harm me, los fusileros americanos will come.'

The words had their effect, though the more reckless of his captors still seemed desirous of killing him. One of them thrust a dirty, unshaven face close to his. 'Listen, gringo!' he growled. 'Don't say Viva Hernandez. Hernandez is in hell, where he belongs. Say Viva Domingo. Say Viva la revolucion!'

Mr. Harris thought fast. The word suggested communism, confiscation, everything that seemed most terrible to the responsible representative of a New York investment house. But he was obviously confronted with a fact, not a theory. If there had been a revolution, it was at least as much a revolution against the president as against the late General Hernandez. Mr. Harris saw Antonia's laughing eyes, he saw the president's nasty leer. His heart filled with hate. In addition he did not wish to be hit again with the hard butt of a Eulalian rifle.

He opened his mouth and said with as much enthusiasm as he could muster, 'Viva Domingo! Viva la revolucion!'

This performance amused his captors, who in

their gay and light-hearted way were almost as well satisfied to see a Yankee make himself ridiculous as they would have been to shoot him. Besides, they really did not want the fusileros americanos to come. Mr. Harris sensed the change in their attitude and was relieved if not flattered. He added quickly: 'Take me to your generalisimo. I have something to say to him.'

There was another laugh at this, the reason for which Mr. Harris did not understand. Several men turned and inspected the top of the hill on the left-hand side of the canyon. The dust was blowing in curious puffs.

'Take him, Diego!' said somebody.

Diego hesitated. Why go and be shot at when there was no need? Why hadn't they killed this gringo before he began to talk? But his comrades, with that sense of fun which no Eulalian ever lost, urged him on. 'He is afraid,' jeered one of them. 'He is longing for his mother's milk. He dare not go where the gringo is ready to follow.'

Diego started sulkily up the hill. The battle came to meet them. Mr. Harris heard whining sounds all around him. A splinter of rock knocked his hat off. He was very hot, though the red sun was now low in the west. But he kept on because it seemed ever so much better to risk being killed by a rifle bullet or a shell than to be sure of being killed by a dozen unwashed patriots, and also because he could not bear to give up what he had come for.

As he neared the summit, the lead and stone, to

his immense relief, ceased to fly about so briskly. His guide pointed out two men leaning against a ledge, and then, with a jump and a rattle of flying pebbles, was gone.

One of the two men, the younger, looked familiar, despite dirt, blood, beard, and rags of clothes. Mr. Harris approached him.

'If I am not mistaken,' he said politely, 'you are Señor Gomez. We were in the presidential chambers at the same time on Wednesday evening. I did not have the chance to present myself. I am Mr. Harris.'

Domingo's keen gaze slid round and rested on him. He knew a great deal about Mr. Harris. The sternness of his expression did not alter. He studied Mr. Harris very carefully.

'You are a little late,' he observed, as Rafael bowed and mentioned Mr. Harris's name. 'There was more to see a little earlier.'

Mr. Harris sat down as low as he could behind the ledge and mopped his face with his handkerchief. There was still some occasional firing. 'I have seen as much as I cared to see,' he said. 'I am afraid I should make a poor soldier. And have you beaten them?'

'For the time being.'

'You have changed commanders?'

'General Hernandez had the misfortune to be killed by his own men. It is a bad habit they have, of which we shall try to break them.' Domingo waited. 'You came to see the generalisimo? I am the generalisimo.'

Mr. Harris tried a bold stroke. 'I came to start a revolution.' He gasped at his own temerity. He imagined his respectable employers in New York perishing instantly of apoplexy if the words should reach their ears. He tried saying the same thing in language of which they could have approved. 'You know who I am, General Domingo. I came to Santa Eulalia in the joint interests of your country and my employers. I have done my best to work openly with the duly constituted authorities. But I find it no longer possible to deal with an administration which does not respect its agreements.'

Domingo's eyes contracted, but he did not say anything.

'The president is a pig!' cried Rafael hotly. 'Any enemy of his is a friend of ours.'

Mr. Harris looked pained. 'I did not say,' he went on hastily, 'that I considered the president my enemy. It is simply that I have come to believe that neither Santa Eulalia's interests nor our own are safe in his hands. I have wished — I hope unselfishly — to introduce American capital, to develop the country, to make work, to raise the standard of living. My confidence has been abused. I knew that General Hernandez was not wholly in sympathy with the administration. I differed with him on several points, but I came here to-day resolved to offer him an opportunity to serve his country. Fate has removed him and put you in his place. I now offer the same opportunity to you. If you believe as I do in democracy and the rights of property, we shall not quarrel.'

'I can put it more simply,' interrupted Domingo. 'We shall not quarrel if you do not get in my way.' He took a careful look about the now darkening horizon, called to an officer near by and sent off an oral message to Perez on the opposite hill, then sat down by Mr. Harris's side, offered Mr. Harris one of his infamous black cigarettes, lighted one himself when Mr. Harris refused, and asked, 'How much?'

'How much what?' demanded Mr. Harris.

'How much money will you give me if I do whatever it is that you want me to do?'

Mr. Harris, whose bargaining instincts were always near the surface, came near being caught off his guard. He almost mentioned a sum.

Then he said, 'A government in which our people had confidence could, of course, command credit. My employers would have confidence in any government which would encourage our plan for the development of the oil lands in what I think you call Eulalia Irredenta. There would also be some — ah — private credit, if I may use the term. But that is not what I came to offer you to-day, General Domingo. I came to offer you' — Mr. Harris paused dramatically — 'I came to offer you victory!'

'Perhaps we need not take it as a gift,' said Domingo dryly, 'but go on.'

Mr. Harris cleared his throat. 'Señor Gomez or some other informant has doubtless made you acquainted with the character of the cargo which is expected to arrive on the Lady Anne. Well, General

Domingo, I come to offer you that cargo. I have it under my hand.'

Domingo smiled. 'You are deceiving yourself, Señor Harris. I was already making arrangements to take the cargo immediately upon its arrival to-morrow morning. The city is ours whenever we wish to march in.'

'The cargo will not be landed in the city of Santa Eulalia.' It was Mr. Harris's turn to smile. 'More than that, there is only one person in Santa Eulalia who knows whether it will arrive at all, or if it does arrive where it will be put ashore. Santa Eulalia, if you don't mind my saying so, is a little backward in some respects. It has but one adequate radio telegraphic sending and receiving set. That happens to belong to me — or did until the president of your republic stole it from me to-day. It has but one person capable of operating such a set. That person is myself.'

'I begin to understand,' Domingo observed.

'Exactly,' said Mr. Harris.

'And just what is it you want?' Domingo asked.

Mr. Harris reflected a moment. 'You must not make peace until the Tolosanos agree to cede Eulalia Irredenta.' He added quickly: 'You must not misunderstand me. If I thought that a permanent peace could be made now — a peace without victory, if I may put it that way — I should heartily favor it. But I have come to believe, after a careful study of the situation, that the best way to avoid useless bloodshed is to settle the question now for

good and all. I think we should look upon this war, as far as Santa Eulalia and Nueva Tolosa are concerned, as a war to end war.'

'As a soldier,' returned Domingo, 'I am not sure that I am opposed to what you call useless bloodshed. Dying is merely a question of taste, once it is agreed that we must die in one way or another. You, Señor Harris, perhaps prefer to die slowly in a bed. As for me, if I have to die, I should prefer to die quickly — on such a hill as this.' He looked out over the darkening scene, still punctuated by occasional flashes of fire. 'But you may be sure that as far as I have power no peace will be made until Eulalia Irredenta is in your — that is to say, our — hands.'

'You will realize how strong my position was,' continued Mr. Harris, made garrulous by his own success, 'when I say that I sent a message this afternoon to the captain of the Lady Anne directing him to put his cargo ashore late to-night or early to-morrow morning at a certain spot, provided that he received the agreed-upon signals from the shore. Only I know where that spot is and what the signals are.'

He lowered his voice and the three instinctively drew nearer together. He wished he could put his agreement with Domingo into writing and have it witnessed before a notary public.

'Can we hold them till the cargo arrives?' asked Rafael.

Domingo's voice was grave. 'If it arrives soon

enough. Our ammunition will give out if they make a determined attack in the morning.'

Rafael flamed with eagerness. 'Let me go with Señor Harris. Send enough men after us to guard the landing. If the pig of Santa Eulalia tries to interfere, we will fight him.'

'That is a good plan.' Domingo turned to Mr. Harris. 'And where are these men to be sent?'

Mr. Harris hesitated. His sense of power suffered at the thought that in two minutes he would no longer be the master of Santa Eulalia. However, there was no help for it. If the Tolosanos beat the Eulalians, as they well might if the munitions were lost, it would be Mr. Fergueson, not Mr. Harris, who would control the country. If Mr. Harris wished to buy, he must first spend.

'I have directed the captain,' he answered, 'to land his cargo at Pedragosa Bay, in case he receives the proper signals. As I shall be there to give the signals, I need not explain them to you.' He felt relieved. As long as he kept the signals to himself, he was still of some importance.

Domingo readily assented. 'I will rely on you to see that everything goes well,' he added. 'If it did not, my men who are to accompany you would be disappointed.'

Mr. Harris felt less masterful. The conversation of these Latin Americans was always charged with double meanings. You could never tell exactly what they were thinking, though you sometimes had uncomfortable suspicions.

'The sooner the better,' concluded Domingo. 'You should start at once. The cavalry and trucks will follow without delay.'

Rafael took Domingo's hands. 'Do not get yourself killed,' he begged. 'There is but one Domingo.'

'Ah, Rafaelito,' returned the shoemaker cheerfully, 'we have bidden each other so many farewells these last few days that I think we shall live to bid each other many more. Now go, and good luck go with you.'

Mr. Harris and Rafael left Domingo at the top of the hill. They could see his figure against the sky. A big shell, probably from the Englishman's gun, dropped somewhere out in front. Mr. Fergueson's young protégé was putting in a full day's work.

A group of soldiers still hung about the automobile, hoping to be able to kill Mr. Harris after all. Mr. Harris, feeling very much like a mouse surrounded by cats, climbed in and Rafael followed him. Never had the pulsation of an automobile engine sounded so beautiful to him. They slid slowly along the dusty road. The headlights, switched on as they started, showed men stumbling along at the side — wounded seeking a hospital tent which some one said had been erected at the rear, up the pass a mile or two. Some who could not walk lay in the dust, groaning, swearing, weeping. One man kept screaming. It was the first time Mr. Harris had ever heard a man scream.

They drew out of the military zone after a while and the waning battle was only an echo behind

them, no more disturbing, unless one stopped to think what the sounds meant, than half a dozen bullfrogs singing in a pond on a summer night in New England. Again it was one of those clear Santa Eulalian nights, with stars behind stars in a fathomless sky. Mr. Harris, pressing his foot on the accelerator, drew a long breath. He could think about the war more tranquilly. He could compare himself to a surgeon who cuts a leg off to save a life. The blood was not on his hands. He had not been the cause of that scream.

For a time they had no conversation. Then Mr. Harris asked, in his lame Spanish, 'Are you a professional soldier, Señor Gomez?'

'I have been a clerk in a law office,' answered Rafael.

Mr. Harris nodded approvingly. 'It is a good thing for a young man to know something about law, even though he doesn't intend to pursue a legal career. And you, have you any plans after the war is over?'

'Plans?' repeated Rafael vaguely. The word didn't seem to convey any meaning. The only plan he now had was to kill the president. After that — well, he would follow whatever roads led to power. He would wallow like the rest of them, get his feet deep in the trough.

'You should be preparing for something — preparing for the opportunity when it comes. You'll want to marry some day. Won't you want to be able to make a home for your bride?'

'Marry?' Rafael almost laughed. 'No, I shall never marry, Señor Harris. I should grow tired of one woman. I shall have many women. I shall have mistresses.'

Mr. Harris sighed and bent to his steering-wheel as he rounded a dangerous curve. This Latin-American temperament presented some shocking difficulties. He was trying to build his career upon it, and it was always evading him. Like a flea — very much like one of the Santa Eulalian fleas. The cynicism of this apparently very nice young man was appalling. But he couldn't let himself be influenced by that. He could not do what he wanted to do in Santa Eulalia without using the services of just such young men.

So he said: 'My employers may be able to do something for you after this trouble is over. We shall be looking for men like yourself who will be willing, as we say in America, to grow up with the country.'

'Yes?' said Rafael. What in the name of God did growing up with the country mean?

Mr. Harris's words ran on and on like a hard, bright stream. They impinged upon Rafael's ears without producing ideas in Rafael's head. He had slumped down in his seat, his chin upon his breast. He slept through all the joltings of a three-hours' trip. A thousand years seemed to have gone by since he had last slept tranquilly in a bed. He emerged from a great depth of sleep only when the car stopped abruptly at the edge of the beach of

Pedragosa. He opened his eyes with difficulty and sat up. It was not yet midnight.

'This is the place,' said Mr. Harris. 'I do not think they will be here for several hours yet, and they cannot begin landing until dawn, but I think one of us should be on guard.'

'I have slept a little,' agreed Rafael. 'It is my turn to keep awake.'

Mr. Harris lay down in the sand, grumbling somewhat at the chill of the night and the shifty nature of his bed. He thought with real regret of his comfortable room in the city of Santa Eulalia. What would Antonia make of his absence? He hoped she'd believe he was with another woman. Yes, he did, though he knew that such a thought was hideously immoral. He dozed off and dreamed that Antonia, all in tears, had come to his room to beg for forgiveness. Should he forgive her? He couldn't decide. She was certainly very lovely, and through all the vicissitudes of her life she had kept that innocent, childish look in her eyes.

The scene of his dreams changed. He had moved into a duplex apartment high up in a building on Park Avenue. He was so high up that he could see New Jersey, Staten Island, Long Island, the Hudson River, and Bear Mountain. It was like being up in an airplane. People crawled like worms below. That was symbolical. No, he wasn't in his apartment at all. He was being married from Saint Thomas's Church. He could not see his bride's face clearly. She lifted her veil. It was Antonia!

The scene changed. Antonia was giving a tea. All Mr. Harris's aunts and uncles from Maine were there, and so were some of his associates from the bank. It was hard to keep the conversation going. People went into the corners and whispered and pointed. So his dreams flowed and merged.

Rafael could not have slept even had he been free to do so. One reason was that Pedragosa Beach was the spot to which he and Vitoria had come on that night so very long ago — Monday night, and now Saturday was coming.

He got down and walked along the strip of hard sand, and found the dead embers of the fire they had sat and lain beside. He got down on his knees and let the ashes run through his hands. So ran through his grasp the ashes of his youth. To-morrow, perhaps, he would kill Vitoria's lover. Yes, her lover — he would not flinch from the word. With the president out of the way and himself climbing to a position of power, would she desire to come back to him? What a jest that would be! How merrily their wedding bells would ring, what loveliness would the canon not behold when he looked down to marry them — and then, when they were left alone together, what a silence, what a deafening, blinding silence would fall between them!

The night wore on. Once, sitting with his head on his knees, Rafael slept awhile.

At four o'clock in the morning, when it was still pitch dark, the lights of the Lady Anne came slowly into view. She was sweeping the coast with her

searchlight and trying to pick up the landmarks which indicated Pedragosa Beach.

Rafael awoke Mr. Harris, who immediately switched on the lights of his car and then switched them off and on again at regular intervals. The Lady Anne replied, first with a quick revolution of her searchlight, then with several mournful toots on her whistle. As she lay to, Rafael heard the sound of hoofs, the jingling of metallic equipments, and the chugging of motor trucks, and the rebel detachment which was to aid them in landing and carrying off the munitions began to emerge from among the pines.

Thanks to Mr. Harris's careful planning and to the seamanship of the captain of the Lady Anne, the landing operations went off without a hitch.

First came a boat with a mate, who greeted Mr. Harris in disrespectful language and damned him roundly for picking Pedragosa Beach when he had the whole of both coasts of Latin America to choose from. As far as the mate was concerned, one revolution was as good as another. Mr. Harris, rejoicing at the music of his native tongue after having heard so much Spanish, explained his motives. The mate replied that he never could tell one set of greasers from any other set of greasers, but that he supposed business was business.

Fortunately the weather held calm, and, though the Lady Anne rocked in the heavy Pacific swells, she held to her anchors like the obstinate little ship she was while the boats came and went. The cases

of machine guns, which according to historic precedent were labeled sewing machines, offered no difficulties. The landing of the airplane was more precarious; at times it seemed, indeed, impossible. It was finally managed by lashing two boats together and depositing the precious machine on an improvised platform laid across them. The whole came ashore with the aviator, a quiet little man in his early thirties, sitting whistling on one of the wings. At the last moment a breaker nearly tipped him and his airplane into the surf. Half a hundred men ran into the water shoulder deep, and as the wave drew back hauled the airplane to dry sand.

The aviator gave the landing-gear a paternal inspection. 'Sounded as though we'd cracked an axle,' he said, crawling out and wiping his hands. Then he went over the rest of his equipment, nut by nut and brace by brace. Finally he walked up and down the beach, stamping to try the hardness of the sand. He shook his head lugubriously. It wouldn't do. Mr. Harris was beginning to worry, though the trucks were already loading the machine guns.

The aviator climbed the bank and came back somewhat happier. They towed the machine painfully to the spot he indicated. He got in while one of the engineers from the Lady Anne stood by to twirl the propeller. In his helmet, which he now put on, he looked like a crusader, idealized in some old print, a Galahad setting forth to strike down evil and rescue the virtuous and the lovely.

'And now,' he asked, 'where is your revolution?'

He patted the machine gun mounted in front of the cockpit. 'Which side am I fighting on? How can I tell 'em apart?'

Rafael explained to the best of his ability. With a great throbbing sound the machine took on speed, lifted, cleared the banana trees on the windward side of the patch of ground. The aviator circled back, low enough for his face to be seen, waved, grinned cheerfully, and was gone.

XIV

Those who said that Messrs. Fergueson and Riley never moved from their position in front of, or within, depending upon the weather, their favorite Café de la Natividad, uttered a gross libel against two very worthy gentlemen. Each had an office to which he had been known to go. Each slept at home nearly every night. Each took a little walk every afternoon. But it was easy to spend most of one's time at the Café de la Natividad if one were not otherwise pressingly occupied. One arrived, for example, about eleven o'clock in the morning, after a late breakfast. One had a cocktail or a whiskey-and-soda. Imperceptibly one o'clock arrived and soon after that it was time for lunch. Such of the Santa Eulalians as could afford the luxury took both a lunch and a siesta. The others omitted lunch. Mr. Fergueson and Mr. Riley would have their midday meal at the café, which was also a restaurant and hotel, and then they would take a little nap leaning back in their chairs with their feet on the table. After their nap, which might last until half-past four or five, came their walk, which they generally took in company when they were on speaking terms, and sometimes when they were not, and by the time their walk was over they were ready for another cocktail or another whiskey-and-soda, or several of each, or for an experimentation with the native

wines and liquors. It was then hardly worth while for them to go to their offices before dinner, except on very urgent business, and as no business ever seemed urgent to either of them they commonly remained at the café until dinner time. They ate slowly and followed up their meal with several heavy cigars and more drinks, and so the evening slipped by and bedtime came.

It was therefore not remarkable that they were seated in front of their favorite resort between eleven and twelve o'clock on the Saturday morning which had witnessed the landing of the Lady Anne's cargo. It would have been remarkable if they had not been.

'This revolution,' complained Mr. Fergueson, 'is the dullest thing of the sort I ever attended. All they do is talk. It's a beastly way of managing a revolution.'

'All irony aside,' replied Mr. Riley, 'you don't do them justice. They're tired out. You must remember that they've hardly slept a wink since Tuesday night. They've had a hard week. At that you'll have to admit they're doing a lot of talking.'

This was true. The Café de la Natividad was crowded with the better class of Santa Eulalians, which meant those who wore shoes and changed their shirts once a week, and all were talking at once. Street-corner conferences were also still going on. The town buzzed. It had, in fact, stopped work in order to talk. Every one was having a vacation except a few slaves of public necessity who

clung to their jobs because even at this hour of trial the Eulalian democracy insisted upon eating and drinking.

There were reasons why the revolution in the city itself had not proceeded at a swifter pace. At the last moment the president had managed to retain for home defense several regiments which he had attached to his interests by the grant of special favors. These troops were stationed in and around the plaza, with bayonets fixed and belts well filled with cartridges. To the Eulalians, who were after all discreet and peaceable by nature, it seemed better to satisfy themselves with talking about their liberties until the patriots at the front could come back and fight for them. This decision was supported by such emissaries as the rebel army had had time to send into the city. Consequently there had been as yet no attack upon the palace or the ayuntamiento. On the other hand, the loyal regiments, who were, after all, Eulalian, and therefore not disposed to attempt the impossible, had refrained from patrolling the outlying streets.

Yet the quiet which had come over the city seemed more than these obvious reasons could wholly account for. Within the plaza itself people passed to and fro on their ordinary errands as though the soldiers were not there. And something had happened to the soldiers themselves. They lounged about uneasily under their martial splendor, watched the doors of the palace, and spoke in subdued tones. The palace itself revealed no signs of

activity. The president, it was said, was seeing no one — not even his closest friends. But why was he seeing no one? What did he propose to do? Would he run for it or make a stand? Would he dicker with the revolutionists? Would he try to get Mr. Riley to send for los fusileros americanos?

Mr. Riley looked knowing when this last question was brought up by Mr. Fergueson. 'Of course,' he said, 'all I have to do is to send a cable to Washington and they'll have a warship around here in no time. But there has to be some kind of an excuse. You go get yourself killed, Fergueson, that's a good fellow.'

'How about getting killed yourself?' demanded Mr. Fergueson.

'I had thought of that,' Mr. Riley returned. 'It isn't because I love the society I have to put up with here that I mind dying. But I'm too young — too young and handsome.'

'Not that I should mind dying, either,' Mr. Fergueson mused, with an undertone of intense bitterness, 'if that was the only way I could ever hope to leave this hole. I can stand hardship. But this last week has been a little too much. Not a clean shirt for three days. No hope of one for another three days. It's always mañana, mañana, and never to-day. They're vegetables, that's what they are — vegetables. Wait till the Tolosanos get in here. Those fellows have some life to them.'

'Phew!' Mr. Riley made a wry face. 'Talk about washing. Have you ever smelled those friends of yours? If you think these people here are dirty ——'

Mr. Riley interrupted himself and put down his glass. Something was happening. Several things were happening. First there came a tremendous whirring overhead, like the buzzing of one of those fat green flies which flourished in Santa Eulalia, but of a fly multiplied ten thousand times.

'An airplane, by God!' cried Mr. Riley. 'Lindbergh, as I live!' He and Mr. Fergueson rushed into the plaza, followed by all the other occupants of the café. All Santa Eulalia was swarming into the open spaces. Even the soldiers had forgotten their dignity and were gazing upward open-mouthed.

The machine came into sight past the buttresses of the cathedral, swooped so low over the plaza that the aviator's grinning countenance was plainly visible, then shot upward and began to turn, twist, and loop in a series of amazing gymnastics. Suddenly it straightened out in level flight, and there was a crackle of sound audible above the roar of the propeller. A thin smoke drifted.

'He's got a machine gun!' cried Mr. Riley. 'But who in hell is he? If he's a Tolosano, we're going to be in a devil of a mess in about three minutes.'

'I can assure you,' said Mr. Fergueson, 'that he is not a Tolosano. They have no airplanes.'

'You'd know, wouldn't you?' cried Mr. Riley. 'You'd have your ten per cent on the purchase price.'

Whatever doubt remained was resolved by the presidential troops, who had come out of their first stupor and were now standing about the plaza firing

into the air. The plane was certainly a Eulalian plane, but it belonged to the revolutionary party — to the revolutionary wing, as Mr. Riley prettily remarked.

The aviator swooped low again, waving a derisive hand. Some of the shots fired at him, it was later learned, killed several women and children on the other side of the city. It had not occurred to the simple-minded soldiers that what goes up must also come down.

The aviator himself had let off only a few rounds, and those without taking apparent aim at anything on the ground. But now the firing around the plaza had its echo in a brisk fusillade toward the Cuartel del Norte, near the old presidio. The presidential regiments began to stir. A few companies formed in front of the palace, the others parted at a trot in the direction of the firing.

Mr. Riley looked at Mr. Fergueson. 'I hope,' he said, 'that you'll have noise enough to satisfy you. Shall we go inside?'

Mr. Fergueson snorted indignantly. 'Go inside for a Eulalian revolution! You can if you like. I'll sit here and see it through.'

'Spoken like a true-born Englishman!' cried Mr. Riley in mock admiration.

An increase in the volume of the firing seemed to mark the arrival of the presidential reënforcements at the scene of action. But this did not last long. The airplane could be seen and heard coming back, circling low again toward the Cuartel del Norte, its

machine gun spitting venomously. When it rose, the firing had practically stopped. There were a few stray shots and then silence.

'Shall we have lunch now?' asked Mr. Fergueson. 'I'm beastly hungry.'

'If you like,' consented Mr. Riley.

They summoned the waiter and gave their orders, beginning with something liquid to give them an appetite. The waiter's hand shook as he filled the glasses and he spilled a little.

It was now past two o'clock. The hour of the siesta had arrived. But for the first time in the memory of living men, Santa Eulalia violated this sacred tradition. The revolution alone would perhaps not have been enough to keep the city awake. But at about two o'clock the Eulalians began to hear the stirring throb of military music from the direction of the Cuartel del Norte. The roll of drums, the vigorous strains of a marching song, the sound of tenor voices singing in chorus rose upon the quiet afternoon air.

There was a sudden blare of brass. The head of the procession rounded the last corner and began to debouch into the plaza. First came a band, playing for all it was worth. Next rode a strange figure, hatless, haggard, dirty, clad in the rags of a civilian costume. Rafael Gomez was returning to Santa Eulalia. Behind him came a detachment of cavalry.

The American aviator had projected himself into the war between Santa Eulalia and Nueva Tolosa with something of the finality which characterized

the intervention of Jehovah in the wars of the Israelites. Acting according to the instructions sent by Domingo, Rafael had divided his forces, sending part back to the front with the trucks of ammunition and keeping the rest in reserve to guard the improvised landing-field and the aviator's stock of ammunition. Two hours after the American had taken off, he had returned with a record of accomplishment which even Jehovah could hardly have surpassed in the same length of time. He had hovered over the Tolosano lines and dropped the two small bombs which he carried underneath the fuselage. Taking advantage of the confusion thus created, he had flown low along the whole Tolosano front, firing point-blank at every clump of men he saw. The results, he flattered himself, had not been negligible.

'You ought to have seen 'em run,' he said. 'Some of the poor devils acted as though they'd never seen a plane before.'

Domingo, watching his chance, had used up almost the last of his ammunition in a quick thrust against the annoyed Tolosanos, who had abandoned their positions and started a hasty retreat toward Santa Clara. It was a tricky landing, but the aviator had managed to set his ship down on a relatively smooth stretch of ground where the river, emerging from the canyon, had made a flood bed, dry at this season of the year, of mud and hard-packed sand. Domingo had sent him back with a message to Rafael to take his handful of cavalrymen and occupy the city without delay.

That was like Domingo, reflected Rafael. If he'd been as cynical as he sounded, he'd have saved that triumphal entry for himself. But Rafael was glad none the less. Here was fame and power. After this day the lawyer's clerk would no longer be obscure, even though it was Domingo who was president.

The aviator was talking about Domingo. He liked him. 'A fine old bird! His brain was hitting on all eight cylinders all right. I flew for the Poles once. Made me think of Pilsudski. I'll hop along now and give 'em a few more birdshot. Then I'll go over and lay a couple of eggs on Nueva Tolosa. Hate to do it, but it's worth a dozen battles. Makes the folks at home sit up and notice what's going on. Saves bloodshed in the long run. Ford system, and all that. After that I'll come back and give you a boost if you need it when you get to Santa Eulalia. I'd better be getting on, though, if I'm going to wind this war up by to-night. This is my last fling, you see. I'm going to be married in September and the little girl says she don't want any dead heroes in her family, not for all the medals in the world. Going to buy a garage in Peoria.'

He made these remarks in English to Mr. Harris, and Mr. Harris translated them as well as he could for Rafael's benefit.

'By the way,' he added, 'I got that big gun of theirs. Pretty a shot as you ever saw. Knocked it clean off the car and blew up the ammunition dump.'

He was up and off, but returned, true to his word, to entertain the amusement-loving populace of Santa Eulalia just as Rafael's little army reached the Cuartel del Norte. Mr. Harris had dropped behind early in the march. Some trouble with the engine or one of the tires, he explained.

Rafael felt anything but heroic, anything but a conqueror, when he saw the familiar cathedral towers against the sky. He was miserably tired, he was unshaven and unwashed. The cavalry would trot and he was unused to riding.

An officer in command of an outpost rode toward them along the Camino del Norte and ordered the advancing cavalry to halt. The man's face was faintly familiar. Rafael remembered in an instant — this was the man who had stopped him four days ago when he was returning from his last rendezvous with Vitoria. Rafael saw the same vague recognition in the other's eyes, as though the brief flash of the lantern had photographed both of them forever, and made it inevitable that they should meet again.

'You must not go any farther,' said the officer firmly, as though he were not outnumbered ten to one.

'By whose orders?' demanded Rafael. His tingling sense of power was coming back. His fatigue was forgotten.

'The president's.'

'We do not recognize the president's orders. We are under the command of General Domingo. We ask you to surrender peaceably. You will see, we

have more men than you can resist. Why shed blood for nothing?' Rafael was pleading, not threatening. Must there be more killing? So much blood had been spilled!

The other seemed to mistake Rafael's tone for an evidence of weakness. He had his revolver out in an instant. 'If you go a step farther, I'll fire!' he warned.

A swift, devastating rage clouded Rafael's vision. All his resentment at an unholy fate concentrated itself upon one man's head. Here was a road he wished to travel and here was an obstacle. By God, he'd ride it down! He spurred his horse suddenly. The animal jumped sidewise, and as Rafael clung to the reins to keep his seat, he felt the hot flame of a pistol shot almost in his face. He had his own pistol out now and he fired straight into the chest of the officer as the man whirled around for another shot. He caught a swift look of surprise, of an almost ludicrous chagrin. Then the other slumped from his saddle, and with a wild burst of yelling the cavalrymen behind Rafael rode through the opposing detachment, shooting and slashing right and left.

It was all over in five minutes. Ten minutes later, going at a hard gallop, Rafael and his men came upon the president's infantry companies deploying from the direction of the plaza. The rebels worked fast. The aviator swooped and sprayed the loyalists with machine-gun bullets. They broke and ran as the cavalry galloped into them. The road to the palace was open.

Rafael called a halt for a breathing space. He had lost only two or three men for the thirty or forty who must have fallen on the other side. Some one brought in a sorry handful of captives.

'These men,' it was explained, 'say they are bandsmen. They will play for us if we promise not to shoot them.'

Rafael felt sick at the thought of more shooting. 'Have they their instruments?' he asked.

'No, but they are in the barracks. They will get them.'

'Very well. Take a guard and see that they do.'

The band returned in due season, feeling very cheerful at not being shot and playing one of Sousa's marches. Rafael put them at the head of the parade and gave the order to proceed. The people were swarming from all sides. Cheering started and spread. Rafael found himself passing the house of Sebastian, Santa Eulalia's least reputable attorney. He gazed upward at Sebastian's face and Julia's at the window, and saw their unaffected consternation. Pride filled his soul.

'You see,' he cried, 'I have found other employment!'

The crowd was pressing into the streets, patting the horses' flanks and catching at the hands of the riders.

'Viva la revolucion!' cried some one. 'Down with the tyrant!'

The cry was taken up.

'To the palace!' The voices were savage. 'Kill

the dirty murderer!' The band swung into the Toreador's song from 'Carmen.' 'Kill the bull!' screamed a woman. 'Viva el toreador!'

It was not Rafael's handful of cavalry who were marching on the palace now, it was practically the whole population of Santa Eulalia. They came out into the plaza, the band still ahead, Rafael still riding just behind the drums. And they began to growl, a growl that might have struck terror to the heart of the bravest president.

Mr. Riley, sitting with Mr. Fergueson in front of the café, saw what happened next, and spoke about it at length afterwards.

'The way she sprang at him,' said Mr. Riley, 'I thought sure she was going to knife him. You know how hot-blooded these people are. I thought she might be a friend of the president or something. The old boy was mighty fond of the ladies, you know, and they say a good many of them fell for him, for one reason or another. But it wasn't that at all, I'll swear to it. She was so damned glad to see him she couldn't hold herself in. I'd give ten years of my life to have a woman jump at me that way. I wouldn't jump away, either. What I don't understand is what in God's name was the matter with him. I couldn't hear what he said, with all the noise that was going on, but he gave her one look, like a wooden man, and went right on. And she kind of fell back, as though he'd shot her.'

'They're all crazy,' Mr. Fergueson declared, 'men and women alike. A week ago everything was as

peaceful as a church. I'd have sworn the president was good for another ten years. And now look at them, turning the whole country upside down. Wasting a week. My washerwoman hasn't turned a hand since Tuesday.'

'I'll never forget her face,' mused Mr. Riley. He was not thinking of Mr. Fergueson's washerwoman, who had taken away all of Mr. Fergueson's soiled linen and had not brought any clean linen back for more than a week. It was for quite another reason that the tears stood in Mr. Riley's sentimental Hibernian eyes.

Rafael heard Vitoria cry his name before he saw her. It was like a call across centuries of time, from a dead life. As distant and as remote. Why should she call to him? She was not his Vitoria any more. Was it a real woman's voice he heard, or an echo within his own dizzy brain? He rode dully on, no longer able to pick one face from another.

'Rafael! Ah, my Rafael, my precious one, my treasure, you are not dead! You are not dead!'

She was clutching at his horse's mane and looking up and sobbing. Her frantic loveliness tore at his heart. But it was not his Vitoria any more, not the Vitoria of the meadow, not the Vitoria of that enchanted dusk on Pedragosa Beach. No, this was the mistress of the president. She had sold herself. Did it make any difference what the price had been? And he had sold himself, too. His hands were bloody. A sea of blood and treachery rolled between them.

He gave a great groan. 'I am dead, Vitoria! I am dead!' And then, when the most beautiful face he would ever see, though he lived a thousand years, still stared up into his incredulously, when her gray eyes with the long lashes opened more widely and would not forsake their desperate quest for his, he added brutally, 'Go to him! Go back to him! He needs you now!'

The crowd swept them apart. He did not hear the words she tried to utter. For an instant her face seemed to float like a flower upon the flood of humanity, then it sank and was gone. The drums were beating like great pulses, the band was blowing its very soul into its instruments. They moved on toward the palace, majestic, irresistible. And now Rafael had but one thought left in the world — to kill, not with weapons, not with a dagger, but with his bare hands, to kill the president.

Across the plaza he saw the entrance doors of the palace. The guards who had stood there a few moments ago were melting away. Some had thrown down their arms and mingled with the mob. Others, trying to run, were set upon. Santa Eulalia's lust for blood was not yet satisfied.

The great doors were unguarded. Rafael put spurs to his horse, regardless of those who were in his path. The beast reared, struck out with its front hoofs, and plunged ahead. Rafael saw a man fall, clutching at a battered face. Then he flung himself off and ran up the steps, his weaponless hands clenched so that the nails brought blood. He knew

the way to the president's chambers. The heavy door was locked. Men ran up and started to batter it with their rifles. It gave way unexpectedly. A soldier got the barrel of his gun into the widening crack, it split and fell. The room was empty.

Rafael raced across to the door opening into the inner apartment. This, too, was locked. Again the butts of rifles came into play. With frenzied strength Rafael whirled a heavy chair over his head. Those in front dodged just in time. There was a crash of smashed panels. The lock fell, and the door remained on its hinges, but other panels gave way under splintering blows. Rafael ran forward.

'Stand back!' he screamed. 'All of you! He is mine!'

A man with rifle raised had drawn away even before Rafael spoke. Two or three others, gazing through the aperture, halted, frozen, suddenly silent.

Rafael pushed past them. Here was the great evil of the world, here was the source of sorrow and disillusionment, here was the maker of madness, here, under his hands, to kill! He looked and saw, lying among fragments of broken glass, in a welter of blood and wine, the president, dead.

XV

THE golden age that now unmistakably dawned upon Santa Eulalia was thought by some observers to be due to no more esoteric a cause than the mere removal of a former president. As time passed, this unfortunate functionary was to sum up in the popular imagination the crimes of all the chief executives, generalisimos, dictators, murderers, thieves, and liars who had preceded him, and to take on the legendary proportions of a Nero or a Borgia. This was rankly unjust, for in the first place many of the evils for which the defunct statesman was blamed were those which at the time were inherent in any Eulalian government, and in the second place his natural obesity and inertia had kept his score of atrocities rather below the par of Eulalian administrators. He was unlucky, however, in being followed by a president who introduced a strange new principle into Eulalian politics, that of killing or robbing no more of his constituents than was absolutely necessary. The contrast was too glaring, and the memory of the martyred politician suffered in consequence.

But the new day of peace and prosperity in Santa Eulalia, that skillful mingling of the old and the new which has since made the republic a model for Latin-American civilizations, that blending of Fordized factories and quaint traditions, of sanitation and joy in living, of fandangos and advertising

campaigns, of piety and practicality, of shrewdness and imagination, which has aroused such universal admiration and has done so much to improve relations between Latin America and the United States — these happy developments were not the result of chance or of a merely negative policy. They came about because of what may be called a conspiracy, to which Domingo, Mr. Harris, and the canon were parties.

Saturday afternoon and evening had witnessed not only a complete revolutionary victory in Santa Eulalia, but also the total collapse of the Tolosano offensive. The morale of the invaders seemed to have given way completely under the attacks from the air and the advance of the newly armed Eulalian machine-gun squads. The Tolosano gun, already bombed from its car by the American aviator, fell into the hands of the Eulalians and the gunner was wounded and captured. For some reason, perhaps because of his imperturbable calm and good humor, the Eulalians refrained from killing him.

By midnight on Saturday the Tolosano retreat had become a rout, and Domingo judged it safe to leave the further conduct of the battle to his two faithful fellow sergeants, Enriquez and Perez. Their instructions were to push forward until they had cleared Eulalian soil of the invaders and had occupied Eulalia Irredenta. They were then to assume a position from which they could readily advance if need were, and await the result of negotiations.

This moderation on Domingo's part was afterwards bitterly criticized by admirers of the old régime. The Tolosanos, they pointed out, would have been far more submissive and meek in the years that followed had a few of their villages been burned, a few of their mayors shot, and possibly, though this was said in whispers, a few of their women ravished. Domingo should have marched straight on Nueva Tolosa, they insisted, and sacked the city. But these critics of Domingo's policy seem not to have represented a majority of the Eulalians, who, once the fighting was over, relapsed into their habitual lazy good nature.

Domingo, at any rate, left his victorious army shortly after midnight, and returned to Santa Eulalia in the handsome motor car which General Hernandez would not need any more. By dawn he was installed in the presidential palace, where the litter of broken glass and smashed woodwork had been cleared away. The revolutionists had shown much self-restraint, for though they had chopped up or carried off some of the furniture and stolen whatever easily portable articles they could lay hands on, they had not burned the palace down.

Domingo settled himself behind his predecessor's desk, and, sending for the deceased executive's official secretary, attended to a number of essential details. This functionary had been in the habit of helping the president to phrase many of his routine public utterances, just as the charming young lady across the hall had assisted in the composition of his

social and private utterances. He was a mild, bald-headed, weak-eyed, middle-aged little man, who by his tact and his familiarity with the machinery of administration had survived a number of presidents. No matter how outraged the Eulalians were by the conduct of a chief executive, they had always refrained from cutting this secretary into pieces or throwing him out of the window. Without him government in Santa Eulalia could hardly have functioned. If a president had to appoint a day of thanksgiving, condole with a foreign monarch on the death of a relative, explain to a delegation from a remote province why he could not lay a corner-stone, deliver an address at the annual meeting of the Operatic Association, say a few apt words at a bull-fight, kick out an old Congress, call a new Congress — if a president had to do any of these things, it was Señor Calvo who was called upon to furnish the words and music. Sometimes he was called in on even more important occasions, as when it became necessary for an incoming president to explain exactly what he was doing in the presidential chair.

Thus for several administrations the state papers of Santa Eulalia had a similarity of style that puzzled the historians. Was there, they asked, a political genius peculiar to Santa Eulalia? And if so, why? Señor Calvo never answered these questions, but sometimes, when he was alone, he permitted himself to smile a little. Domingo, with the secretary's help, now drew up a decree dissolving the existing Congress, another one declaring himself

temporary dictator and a third calling for a new election next week.

There were other little matters to attend to. One was a general proclamation of amnesty to all who would lay down their arms and recognize the new government. This Domingo wrote in rough draft himself, in a large sprawling hand, and turned over to Señor Calvo to be polished up. Several sentences of the joint product were thought good enough to be carved on the statue afterwards erected in Domingo's honor in the center of the plaza. The tourist who visits Santa Eulalia in these later days — and with improved transportation facilities, good roads, a new hotel, and a Chamber of Commerce which takes advertising space in the best American magazines there are now a great many tourists — may recall the lines in Spanish which begin, 'Enough blood has been shed. From henceforth let the citizens of Santa Eulalia dwell in brotherhood among themselves and at peace with all the world.'

The first sentence was Domingo's, the second Señor Calvo's. Señor Calvo told his wife about it, and every Sunday after the statue was erected Señora Calvo used to bring the five little Calvos to read their father's immortal words.

When the secretary had gone, on the Sunday morning following the completion of the revolution, Domingo slept a little, lying back in his chair with his feet on a table. After that he had breakfast. He had not finished eating before he began to experience one of the drawbacks of eminence; the corridors

were rapidly filling with people, all of whom wanted something. In most cases there were several who wanted the same thing. In an hour or two he had made a dozen mortal enemies. Finally he had to retire to the little private room where Santa Eulalia's last president had slept, made merry, dined, and died. It was there that he received news that the Eulalian army had already entered Eulalia Irredenta and that the Tolosano generalisimo had sent a flag of truce asking for an armistice. It was there, too, early in the afternoon, while the plaza outside was filled with a madly exultant crowd attempting to outdo its own extravagances of Santa Clara night, that he received the canon and Mr. Harris; and it was there that the future of Santa Eulalia was planned and plotted.

The steps leading toward this conference had been taken by Mr. Harris. He had waited several hours before following Rafael's cavalry into the city, for he was sure that his employers would not wish him to be too conspicuously associated with an uprising which even yet might not be successful. Besides this, the experiences of the day before had not cured him of an inborn dislike of violence. Furthermore, he judged it best in any case to give the situation time to jell before he interfered any further with it. Finally he was extremely drowsy, for his sleep had been much broken of late. So he drove very slowly toward the city, had dinner at a little suburban fonda, waited until he was sure no fighting was going on, and then went quietly home.

On the way he assured himself, from a late edition of *El Telegrafeo* and a brief conversation with the news dealer, that everything had gone even better than he had expected. The defeat of the Tolosano army, the success of the revolution, the death of the president — how could events have played more neatly into his hands? Calm though he was outwardly, his inner man glowed with a kind of exultation. His career was made.

He remembered what the canon had said in their conversation two days earlier, 'We need, perhaps, a more simple, more primitive mind.' Well, Providence had sent them one in this rough sergeant, Domingo. He himself, he felt, would never completely understand Domingo, the man was such a mixture of kindliness and ferocity, of intelligence and ingenuousness. But the canon would fill in the gap. The three of them, if they could work together, would have Santa Eulalia in their hands. And it would be no trick of chance this time — no hocus-pocus with a radio set. They would rule because they would know what was good for Santa Eulalia, and how much of that good they could persuade Santa Eulalia to accept.

They would coax the nation along gently, like a temperamental child. And, each in his separate fashion, they would profit. Domingo would keep the symbols of power, and through him they would retain their hold on the rougher element without which, unfortunately, no democracy seemed able to maintain itself. The canon, for his part, could en-

hance the wealth and prestige of his Church. Mr. Harris's inbred Protestantism rebelled more than a little at this alliance and its natural consequences. Yet something told him that the moral and religious ideas, as he had been pleased to call them, with which his New England infancy had been nourished must inevitably thaw in this disconcerting country, under the spell of its carnal vegetation, its enervating noons and moons, its licentious stars. And Eulalia Irredenta ought to be a fabulously rich concession. It would yield millions, and all would flow through his hands, and some of it — oh, quite legitimately — would stick.

As he approached his place of residence, the current of his thoughts was appreciably deflected, and he wondered apprehensively what he would do and say if he met Antonia. He did not meet her, but he found on his table, near a bed made up with more than ordinary care, a single flower, a poinsettia. For a while the unfathomable mystery of womanhood again troubled his soul. Then he removed the poinsettia carefully from its vase and put it in the waste-basket. Then he took it out again, as though to restore it to its original position, inspected it carefully, smelled it, and threw it back into the basket.

He lay awake a long while trying not to think of Antonia. He forced himself, instead, to construct an imaginary life in New York City — a chaste and respectable existence, as became one of his antecedents, yet decidedly not devoid of luxuries and

amenities. He would be consulted, he would be interviewed, his opinions would have an influence upon the stock market. With these pleasant reflections he fell asleep.

An Antonia with large sorrowful eyes brought in his breakfast, set it gently down on the table, and went away. As she reached the door, Mr. Harris, clearing his throat, wished her a good morning. She seemed to try to reply, but a sob or some other impediment choked her, and she turned away without a word.

Mr. Harris ate slowly and reflectively. Had he, he wondered, behaved decently toward Antonia? He went over in his mind the circumstances of her undeniable treachery. She had played him a mean, cold-blooded trick. She had made a fool of him. So much his intellect assured him. Yet there was no question about it, it was Antonia who felt hurt and grieved, and he, the innocent victim of her wiles, who suffered under a miserable sense of guilt.

He left the house immediately after breakfast, going first to see the editor of *El Telegrafeo*, whom he found preparing a glowing editorial on the sudden turn of events. It was called 'The Dawn of a New To-Morrow.' The editor read it to Mr. Harris, who suggested certain minor changes.

'Of course,' the editor anxiously explained, 'I want to make a good impression on the new administration, even though I was, as you know, somewhat intimately associated with the old. It seems to me that in an emergency like this we should all

get together and support the president — the present president, I mean. It isn't a time for fault-finding, do you think?'

Mr. Harris didn't think it was, though he himself spoke, as he pointed out, as an outsider.

'You will perhaps put in a good word for me with his highness?' the editor suggested.

'You need not worry at all,' replied Mr. Harris generously. 'Your salary from my house and also from the administration — I think I can say that much in advance — will be continued. I may even be able to give you a raise. There are, of course, certain things you should bear in mind.' And he outlined briefly some ways in which a patriotic editor could advance the joint interests of the State, the Church, and Invested Capital.

'By the way,' he asked, as the conversation became for a moment less personal, 'does any one know who really did kill the president?'

The editor shook his head. 'No one cares. It would perhaps be indelicate to inquire. Perhaps it was a lady.'

'But the police?' demanded Mr. Harris. 'Don't they ever investigate such things?'

'They might if the president had lived. But then there would have been nothing to investigate. Besides, he would have been killed, anyway. What difference does it make?'

'But in my country a newspaper editor wouldn't be satisfied until he had the whole truth. He'd spend months trying to find out, if necessary. He'd

make a big story out of it — all over the front page.'

The journalist drew himself up to his full height of five feet, five inches. 'Here we have higher standards. A lady's name is sacred. If she killed him, she had her reasons. That is enough for us.' He cleared his throat. 'And you will take up the matter of my salary with his highness?'

Mr. Harris said he would. But first there were several details to attend to. A long cablegram had to be sent to his employers in New York City, and after that he and the editor fixed up the dispatches which *El Telegrafeo* was sending out to the newspapers of the outside world.

The sudden ending of the war, the triumph of the Eulalian cause, the success of the revolution, and the picturesque career of Domingo the shoemaker-president, gave Santa Eulalia a front-page position that day in every newspaper of consequence in all the civilized countries of the globe. It was rumored that the government at Washington was ready to recognize the administration as soon as the defunct president had been decently buried. Mr. Harris smiled happily. Did this not show that his employers had some influence at the national capital? Why not? Its aims were thoroughly American, thoroughly benevolent.

Mr. Harris dispatched a messenger from the office of *El Telegrafeo* to the canon's residence and another to the presidential palace. He did not wish to see either Domingo or the canon until he could see

them, as he put it, with their feet under the same table. A question of precedence bothered him. Should the president go to the canon or should the canon go to the president? The latter, he finally decided. For the canon to go to the president would be a gracious act of recognition. The government, which was new, needed to be recognized. The Church, which had been there right along, did not. He outlined this reasoning in his note, and the canon, in a reply which came back within an hour, politely assented.

There had been a high mass in the morning in celebration of the victory and the approaching peace. Mr. Harris had heard the joyous ringing of the great bells and had seen the crowds streaming in, bright-colored, merry, seemingly unfatigued by their five days of turbulence and undepressed by the lists of Eulalian dead which were beginning to come in. What a people, he thought, what a people if they would only work!

He and the canon went up the steps of the presidential mansion shortly after three o'clock. He had been so busy arranging the destinies of Santa Eulalia that he had completely forgotten to eat lunch, but he did not feel the gnawing at his stomach. A sweaty veteran of yesterday's fighting led the two through the corridors into the inner room, and they found themselves in the presence of a tired old man who was at one moment a victorious general and a successful revolutionist, and at the next a somewhat embarrassed shoemaker. Domingo had

not yet acquired the dignity that marked his later years. He apologized for the condition of the apartment.

'Something was spilled here,' he said with a faint ironic smile.

'Let us hope,' returned the canon gravely, 'that nothing of the kind will ever be spilled here again.'

Mr. Harris repeated the question he had put to the editor of *El Telegrafeo*. 'Doesn't anybody know?' he demanded.

'Nobody wishes to know,' replied Domingo quietly.

The canon smiled enigmatically. 'The Church knows all — and forgives all.'

Mr. Harris looked from one to the other. This was the damnedest country!

'At any rate,' he said, 'we don't any of us want it to happen again, I take it. Now, I am not sure that any one of us can prevent Santa Eulalia from lapsing back into barbarism. I am not sure that any two of us can. But if the three of us act together, sinking our individual differences of opinion as far as may be necessary, we can give this country the two things it has not had — prosperity and peace.'

'Perhaps,' the canon mused, 'we have not felt the need of either. And perhaps we have had a peace, even in our revolutions and our wars, greater than you know in your own country, Señor Harris. I have been in your city of New York. You do not have revolutions there, so far as I know, and yet it did not seem to me to be peaceful. However, I see

your point and I agree with it. We do not want any more bloodshed than is necessary.'

The priest's irony stung Mr. Harris but faintly. He was too much interested in the magnitude of the idea which had come to him.

'You may think it presumptuous in me, as a stranger in your country, to take the initiative in this conference. But I do so, not as an individual, but as the representative of a force, an influence, which you could not keep out forever if you tried. There is something in us which compels us, almost against our own wills, to attempt what you leave undone. We suffer when we see riches being allowed to go to waste. So we send our own riches here, hoping to get back much more. You see, I am being frank with you. We are not missionaries.' There was a prophetic gleam in Mr. Harris's eye. His cheeks were tinged with color. He saw himself, as from afar off, a large symbolic personage. 'But when we export capital to your country, we also export what I may call the American idea. That idea, in a nutshell, is to want things and then work hard to get them.'

'Just as the Eulalian idea,' murmured the canon, 'is to want as few things as possible in order that we may have as much leisure as possible.'

'Exactly,' Mr. Harris agreed. 'And so, whether we like it or not and whether you like it or not, we are bound to come in contact. It may be friendly contact, it may be otherwise. When I first came to Santa Eulalia, I wanted nothing less than to make

it a second Boston or New York. Lately I have been learning that that is impossible.' Damn it, why couldn't he stop thinking of Antonia? 'And now' — he'd put the girl out of his head for good and all — 'and now I am trying to find a way in which I may aid in developing your resources and enriching your population without taking away anything that you, your reverence, or you, your highness, think essential.'

The canon pondered. 'What you have in mind is at first thought impossible. The old passes. I have felt walls this week trembling on their foundations. It is almost as easy to sack a church as a palace, to kill a priest as a president. Yet if your strength to change is great — and I am speaking not of you alone, Señor Harris, but of all that is behind you — so is my strength to resist. It would be better if we did not come into conflict. It may be that we can find a basis for agreement in the fact that it is the tangible things that you want, and the intangible that we cling to. Our oil is yours. We cannot help that. But in taking our oil, do not rob us also of our joy in living, our love of beauty, our faith.'

'Nor of all our sins!' broke in Domingo with a great laugh. 'Let us keep three or four of our sins, Señor Harris. For, let me tell you, the time may come when the people of Santa Eulalia will be willing to work a little. It is a new idea, but they may come to it. But they will never work for you, in your mines, in your oil fields, or on your plantations, unless they can look forward to a small sin or two in

the evening after their work is done, and perhaps to a bigger sin on Saturday or on Sunday after mass. They will think all day about this sin. It will make them happy, even though they are working. As for the Church, it will not complain, of that I am sure. For if you stop to think about it, your reverence, is not the Church built on sin? Was it not the sins of us common people which built your great cathedral?'

'There are sins and sins,' mused the canon; 'sins of the flesh and sins of the mind, sins of warmth and sins of coldness. I speak not as a priest when I say this, but as a man and a Eulalian I prefer our sins to yours. And if his highness means that we are to continue to sin in our own fashion, whenever we sin at all, rather than in yours, then I am compelled to agree with him.'

Mr. Harris had got beyond his depth. 'I don't see,' he said, 'that this need interfere with my proposal. We three can still stand together — for the good of Santa Eulalia. The experiment is at least worth trying.'

Mr. Harris was so moved by the nobility of his own sentiments at this moment that a slight moisture covered his eyes. It was doubtful if he ever had had or ever would have a nobler moment. Would any one seeing him just then, he wondered, think of the investment business as purely materialistic?

'I agree,' the canon returned gravely. 'It is worth trying. I can promise you that my people will go halfway to meet you.'

'And mine also,' added Domingo, 'mine who are, after all, no other than his reverence's in another mood. But there is little that I can do, or would wish to do. That I see clearly after twenty-four hours of power. What we need in Santa Eulalia is not more laws, but more singing and dancing. The right to sing and dance is the beginning and the end of my new Santa Eulalian constitution. The rest is words. I shall defend that right, against you, Señor Harris, against even you, your reverence, against the world. But I do not think I shall ever again fight for anything else.'

'Then,' concluded Mr. Harris, 'I think we understand one another.'

'In a practical way, yes.' The canon's expression was sufficiently ironical.

'In a practical way,' Mr. Harris resumed, taking up the canon's phrase, 'the government of Santa Eulalia will demand the cession of Eulalia Irredenta without reservations of any kind, and will give to my employers, or to those whom they may designate, the exclusive right to develop all mineral resources in the territory ceded. For this right we will pay a certain sum, to be arrived at upon the recommendation of a disinterested board of engineering and financial experts, upon which both our countries and one third country will be represented. We will pay in addition' — Mr. Harris assumed an expression of childlike innocence — 'an honorarium to Señor Domingo for his services in our behalf, and we will offer to the diocese of Santa Eulalia a similar sum to

be expended for the poor, in repairs upon the cathedral, or for any other purpose that may seem desirable to your reverence. I have been making some calculations and have been in touch with my employers in New York. I am authorized to pay in each case the sum of one hundred thousand dollars in gold.'

The canon retained his dignity. 'You speak with frankness, Señor Harris. Nevertheless, I do not see why we should not accept your gift as an evidence of your good will and of our mutual desire to be of service to one another.'

'Nor I,' said Domingo, 'since I had already made up my mind to drive a hard bargain with you, and since, in addition, I have a use for the money.'

The canon and Mr. Harris, leaving the palace a few minutes later, met Rafael coming in. He saluted them. The canon regarded him with grave composure, but there was also in his expression a significance Rafael had never seen there before. Was it at last a touch of pride?

Mr. Harris held out his hand. 'Congratulations!' he cried. 'We're all proud of you. Come and see me when you can. I may have something more to say about a subject I mentioned the other day. There's a future for young men like you right here in Santa Eulalia. Isn't that so, canon?'

'The Church, too, has need of them,' said the canon. 'Have you thought of that, my son?'

Rafael's wild eyes sought his father's. The Church. The great cathedral with its lofty windows

of stained glass, its dusky aisles leading to the high altar, its carved saints, its organ music and chanting and colorful vestments. To put women by forever, far more decisively, even, than his father had been able to do. To live in a twilight dream.

'I do not know,' he answered vaguely. 'Perhaps I shall come to you in the end. Or perhaps to you, Señor Harris. Or perhaps, if he has need of me, to Domingo — to the president.'

'He is older than either of us,' commented the canon as he and Mr. Harris came out together into the sunlit plaza. 'I have not been so old since I was twenty-two.' He sighed unconsciously at the memory. He saw again, as he walked through the golden glory of the afternoon toward the twilight of the looming cathedral, the golden-haired lost woman, the mother of Rafael. And he sorrowed, not because of his sin, but because his sin was so long past.

Rafael found Domingo still sitting at the table in the inner apartment, with the dark stains still visible on the floor. He sat down and buried his face in his hands, then looked up at the shoemaker with desperate earnestness. But Domingo spoke first.

'It is you, my Rafaelito, who have done all this. Had you not loved your Vitoria, you would never have become entangled in this war. Had you not gone to the war, I should not have gone. Had I not gone, there would have been no victory and no revolution. Your romance has bought peace and freedom for Santa Eulalia.'

Rafael's eyes hardened. 'And for me it has bought — oh, tell me, Domingo, my wise old Domingo, what has it bought?'

'Power — if you wish.'

'I do wish for power. I have nothing else left to wish for.'

'It is quite simple, provided you wish for it hard enough. Few men do, and they, my Rafaelito, my green pumpkin, my still damp infant, my fledgling, are not among the wisest. You are still too young to be President, though as I once told you Tecera was no older than you when he commanded at the taking of Ciudad Diego. But a few years will remedy that. Meanwhile you will be making friends — and losing them. You will flatter some, you will be cruel to others. If some one you have loved is of no further use to you, you will throw him away like a worn-out sombrero. If your interests clash with mine — why, then, dear Rafaelito mio, you will quarrel with me. You shake your head. Yet, unless you can do these things, do not seek for power, for in Santa Eulalia it is only by such means that power can be grasped and held. It may be different in Mr. Harris's country. I do not know.'

'And if I do not choose to do what you have said?'

'There is money. What should you say if one of the blessed saints left at your door enough to sustain you all the rest of your life in comfort, to open all avenues to you, to spread the world out before you like a map, to bring to you whatever opportunities you chose, to let you live beautifully, if you wished,

apart from all this struggle, all this madness — you and the woman that you love?'

'I love no woman,' answered Rafael. 'I shall never love any woman again, not for more than a night, or at most a week.'

Domingo stared at him in astonishment. 'Fool!' he cried. 'Have these days in hell taught you nothing? Must we butcher a thousand more men in order to give you the glimmerings of common sense? Tell me, who killed the president?'

'I do not know,' stammered Rafael. 'He had many enemies.'

'I suspected it, my poor child. You are quite without intelligence. For that reason you would have made an excellent president, but I am saving you from that fate. The late president, my predecessor, did indeed have many enemies — so many that no one besides you and myself will ever trouble to find out who killed him. His Japanese servants may have known, but as it happens they were both this morning put aboard a ship about to sail for their native land, which, I am told, is a long way off. But I have found this, in a corner where every one had overlooked it.'

He held up a dagger, a little silver-handled dagger that Rafael knew, the dagger that he had last seen in the right hand of Vitoria Soberanes.

Rafael snatched it from him, and falling upon his knees kissed it passionately. Then he rushed from the room.

XVI

Ever since she had been a child Vitoria had fled to her little spot of meadow and her oak whenever she needed solace. There — how she did not know — she had found it. Solace for broken dolls, for her father's scoldings, for school-day quarrels, for the absence of something she could not clearly define. And there had been answers. . . . The hillside slipped goldenly into a grove of oaks, wherein were dappled blue shadows, and in those shadows, she knew, there was a dancing. Something luminous and gay flitted like a bird, and yet was not a bird. This she had never seen and knew, somehow, that she must not see. Yet it was there. White arms lifted and sank down, white feet moved like lilies in ruffled water. . . . The softly moving air carried the pungency of the dried grasses, the perfumes of forgotten flowers. Little friendly murmurs were barely audible among the oaks. In the deeper shadows there was — could she mistake it? — a dancing, a flitting, a delicate swaying of branches, of leaves, of more than leaves and branches. . . .

But now, on this bright Sunday afternoon, with the humming of bees in her ears and the far-away joyous ringing of the bells of Santa Eulalia, the magic seemed to have gone forever, her hill of dreams was empty and disenchanted. She lay upon the ground, her pride all gone, and sobbed and prayed,

but there was no tenderness anywhere in the universe, and no pity, nothing but a gigantic and mocking laughter.

When she shut her eyes, darkness did not come. Instead came pictures that try though she would she could not help but see. She saw the president's face as he toppled backward, turning swiftly from the heat of lust to frozen terror. Again he collapsed, struggling like a hideous animal, and again she threw the dagger recklessly from her, hearing it fall with a tinkling sound. Again, in slippers of gold, in a dress of wine-colored silk, she passed along the starlit white ribbon of a road that ran from Santa Eulalia to the home that had once been hers. Not in remorse. At first even in a savage joy. Then in a mood of bitter disgust that it should be she, who loved clean and beautiful and delicate things, who should be compelled by fate to play the scavenger and rid the world of this filth that had been the president.

Again she heard her father knocking at her door, asking questions that she would not answer, and again Dolores brought her the food she would not take from her white and trembling mother. Then wild news from the battle front, news of defeats, of victories, of the revolution, had aroused a whirlwind of hope that was almost a certainty. She had risen, dressed, slipped out of the high, low-silled window, speaking to no one, seeing no one, and made her way back to Santa Eulalia. The sinister undertone of rifle-firing throbbed in her ears again, again she heard the gay brasses of the conquering revolution-

ists. Again she caught sight of his dear face — wild, haggard, gray with dust, yet the face of Rafael, her own, her beloved, alive! Never had she known so fierce a stab of joy. It was as though all the joy in the universe had been hammered into a dagger and run into her heart. It was ended now, the nightmare of death and blood and separation. In his arms, her face upon his shoulder, she would remember no more.

'Rafael! Ah, Rafaelito, my precious one, you are not dead! You are not dead!'

She heard her own voice crying out exultantly, triumphantly. And his answering, like lightning out of a blue Eulalian summer sky, 'I am dead, Vitoria! I am dead! Go back to him! He needs you now!' She clung frantically to him, to the one object that could keep her afloat in a universe of drowning, smothering despair. He thrust her away. The brasses were bellowing their loudest. They called him from her, swept him away into a sea of madness.

A woman throwing water in her face. 'Poor señorita! The crowding has been too much for her. Give her air, there! Carry her inside.'

A pitying neighbor drove her home. Her pride returned a little. She needed it, for it was the only emotion she had left. 'It was the heat,' she explained, as she got down at her own gate. 'The heat and the excitement. You see, I'd never seen a revolution before. I was away in the convent school when the last one happened.'

'God save us from another!' The man crossed

himself. 'Just the same, señorita, it was something to be there. Something to tell your grandchildren when you are old.'

Her father's consternation at the success of the revolution. The news of the president's death. The speculations, which she bore with a stony face, as to who had killed him. A night of sleeplessness and frantic dreams. And now again this beloved oak, this once enchanted hillside, stripped, bleak, desolate. Down there, where the spires of the cathedral rose, was something that had hated them. It had won the victory! It had won the victory! Yet she had come here because this intolerable pain, this ache of memory, was easier to bear than the chill emptiness of her earlier mood. Better to clutch this dear ground in agony than to walk the world like a dead soul, unfeeling, unhoping, unsmiling, ironical.

And now her thoughts went to that road which wound over the low hills from the city, that road over which he had come. A road that went up little russet hills, where oaks leaned all one way as though fleeing in great strides from an advancing enemy; that went past vineyards where grapes that had ripened a little during the past week of sunshine hung on endless rows of vines up and down restless slopes; that came at last to this, her oak. Sometimes, when they had made a rendezvous, she had pictured him coming along this road, and had seen him almost as plainly, in her excited imagination, as though he had been already before her eyes. When the moment came for him to arrive, she would turn

away and not look, hoping to be surprised by his touch. But sometimes she could not wait, and then she would be thrilled to the last fiber of her being when he strode over the brow of the last little hill, and she knew him by the lilt and gladness of his walk, and the way he carried his head, and the eagerness with which he quickened his pace. Then she would run to meet him. Or she would draw back a little among the trees and let him wait, five, ten, fifteen minutes, for the joy of the suffering it caused her, and for the swift delight and desire that came into his eyes when he first saw her. So long ago it was, in another, a more blessed incarnation, in a lovelier world. Why had she tried to save him, why had she not let him die and then have died herself? She remembered her own words on that final evening, that God, like his excellency the general, like his highness the president, also had His price. He had, He had; only, being omnipotent, He drove a sharper bargain than the others. She heard God laughing in heaven.

And then, as though the Blessed Virgin had interceded, the burden lifted, the horror passed away, and she knew, without looking up, that she had paid all that God the bargainer meant to ask — paid in blood and agony. For she was aware in that moment that Rafael had passed along the white ribbon of road, had turned in by the oak, had crossed the field, and now stood behind her. She knew, too, before he spoke, before she saw his eyes, that he had not come to reproach her.

She rose slowly, quivering, to her feet. Her gray eyes, with their specks of green and violet, opened widely and sought his. Her dark hair, with its glowing ruddiness, fell unconfined by braids all about her face. He wavered, weak from hardship and sleeplessness. He held between his hands the dagger with which the president had been killed.

'See,' he said, 'I have brought it back to you. I have brought your honor back to you.'

She would not take it, would not let him come nearer. She would not take her happiness as charity, not even from God, not even from Rafael.

'No, not my honor, Rafael. Whatever I had to do I would have done in honor. I did not kill for honor. I killed for revenge.'

'For revenge?'

'Because, Rafael, he told me he had had you killed.'

He looked down somberly. He toyed with the weapon. 'And had it not been for that —— ?'

'I would have done anything to save your life. Had it been necessary for me to sell my body, I would have done it, I was prepared to do it. That would have been my honor, Rafael, had you needed such a sacrifice. But he told me that you were dead — dead and bloody in a ditch — and I killed him, I killed him!'

'Then you were not his mistress.' He moved as though to take her in his arms. 'Shall we not forget the rest?'

She drew back a little, with fire in her eyes. 'No;

you must not take me now if you would not have taken me had I been, for your sake, his mistress.' She remembered the passionate boy to whose embraces, to whose kisses she had submitted on Santa Clara night. Some day she would tell him that, not now. Poor Rafael! But he must learn his lesson. 'Oh, Rafaelito mio,' she went on, 'I would have died for you. Cannot you understand how greatly I loved you since I was willing to do more than die for you?'

In that blinding moment Rafael seemed to see himself and his sex, generals, presidents, shoemakers, priests, consuls, financiers — all, without exception, high and low, rich and poor, pious and cynical, stripped to the soul, monsters of egotism and selfishness. He fell upon his knees before her and kissed her ankles and her feet. She stood straight and silent for a moment, waiting to be very, very sure. Then, all at once, she knew what she wished to know, knew that their week had not been altogether in vain, and she slipped down beside him.

'I am dust for you to walk upon,' he whispered.

'No, my Rafaelito, you are a man. And I am a woman. Two animals — perhaps with souls. Who knows?'

There was a dancing. Something luminous and gay flitted like a bird, yet was not a bird. This they had never seen and knew, somehow, they must never see. Yet it was there. White arms lifted and sank down, white feet moved like lilies in ruffled water. The softly moving air carried the pungency of the dried grasses, the perfumes of forgotten flow-

ers. Little friendly murmurs were barely audible among the oaks. In the deeper shadows there was — could they mistake it? — a dancing, a flitting, a delicate swaying of branches, of leaves, of more than leaves and branches.

'Our magic has come back,' said Vitoria. 'Again we shall dream our dream.'

'And forget the madness and the blood? Tell me, Vitoria mia, O queen of my heart, O end of my desiring, O flower of all the flowers of the earth, was that the dream?' He swept a relaxed arm around the horizon as though to include all that had happened to each of them, his battles, the killing of the president, the hideous nightmare of pride and despair that had involved them both. 'Was that the dream? Or this?'

She lay unmoving in his arms, her eyes closed to the kindly sun, her ears listening for sounds of little flutes and violins. She shuddered slightly, and sighed.

'I do not know,' she said at length. 'Perhaps even God does not know.' The sunlight pervaded their beings. They were no longer Rafael and Vitoria. They were one dim consciousness, a hill, an oak, a cloud, a wind moving gently through quiet air. 'But,' she added drowsily, 'it seems to me that I have dreamed those days, and that I am now just beginning to wake up.'

And after this she fell asleep.

XVII

'I rise,' said Mr. Riley, suiting the action of the words by getting quite steadily to his feet, 'with mingled emotions of pleasure and regret — pleasure because of the advancement in life which has come to our distinguished guest, and in which we must one and all rejoice, regret because as a result of that advancement we shall, at least for the time being, lose the felicity of his company.'

Mr. Fergueson said 'Hear! Hear!' in a very loud, very English voice. Mr. Harris, as in honor bound, looked deprecatingly at his plate.

'Our distinguished guest,' continued Mr. Riley, 'came among us a comparative, I may even say a complete stranger. He came unostentatiously. At the start he might have been described as hiding his merits under a bushel. But little by little we became aware of his brilliant intellect, his social charm, his zeal for the public good, his sterling worth. The events of the past two weeks have confirmed the opinion we had already formed, and we have been made happy by learning that his qualities have been recognized by his appointment to an even more responsible office in the firm of which he has been an employee. I think you will agree with me when I predict for him a brilliant future, of which his present achievement is but the beginning. But I foresee for him not only a fortunate personal career, but also an important part in cementing the friendly re-

lations between Santa Eulalia and the outside world and in bringing the blessings of prosperity to the country of which he has made himself a universally beloved resident. Gentlemen' — here Mr. Riley looked fixedly at Mr. Fergueson for some moments and appeared to be indulging in a difficult calculation — 'Gentlemen, I hardly need mention names, for there is but one person present, indeed, but one person in Santa Eulalia who fits the description I have so imperfectly given. But I ask you to drink the health of our fellow resident, our distinguished guest, whom we are also proud to call our friend — Mr. Harris!'

Mr. Fergueson again said 'Hear! Hear!' and both he and Mr. Riley drank very deeply from the tall glasses which stood in front of them.

The farewell dinner to Mr. Harris had been Mr. Riley's idea, and for several reasons Mr. Fergueson had at first opposed it.

'Never could stand the fellow,' said he. 'No more sociable than a clam.' He mused bitterly. 'Always scheming to do himself a good turn.'

Mr. Fergueson was naturally disappointed at the outcome of the war with Nueva Tolosa. It hurt his prestige with his connections in London, and it also hurt his pride. In addition his pocket-book had suffered, at least in a negative way, for he had hoped for some modest returns if Nueva Tolosa had been able to retain its oil lands and lease them to an English company with which Mr. Fergueson had had some dealings.

Mr. Riley had intimated that he understood the causes of Mr. Fergueson's emotions, but he had gone on to express his admiration for those principles of fair play and of courtesy toward a victorious opponent which were, he understood, so beautifully illustrated on the playing fields of Eton, and so common in the records of English diplomacy and English military campaigns as set down by English historians. He had clinched his argument by pointing out that he and Mr. Fergueson would almost certainly be taking dinner at the Café de la Natividad on almost any evening one could mention, and that it would be a lark to string Mr. Harris along a little and perhaps get him a bit drunk. But he really had a very friendly feeling for Mr. Harris, partly because the man from Maine had outwitted Mr. Fergueson so neatly, and partly because his successful efforts to bring in American capital would make his, Mr. Riley's, position as consul a good deal more important than it ever had been before. About this time Mr. Fergueson's laundry had come back, a week overdue, and in the resulting overflow of gratitude to a merciful Providence Mr. Fergueson had consented to the proposed celebration.

'Speech!' cried both Mr. Riley and Mr. Fergueson after Mr. Riley's toast had been drunk.

Mr. Harris blushed. 'If anything could make me dislike to leave Santa Eulalia, even for a short time ——' he began.

'Louder!' shouted Mr. Riley.

'Hear! Hear!' exclaimed Mr. Fergueson.

Mr. Harris cleared his throat. 'If anything could make me reluctant,' he went on, 'it would be the thought of the pleasant company I am leaving behind.'

Mr. Riley leaned his elbows on the table and gazed solemnly up into Mr. Harris's face. 'Meaning us?' he inquired. 'Not meaning that woman of yours, Harris?'

'I think you might drop that joke,' retorted Mr. Harris, temporarily coming out of his rôle as guest of honor. 'It wasn't funny, even at first.'

'You've got your bally nerve,' commented Mr. Fergueson, advancing to Mr. Harris's rescue with horse, foot, and artillery, 'to talk about other people's women. Since when did you live up to your own monastic vows?'

Mr. Riley smiled fatuously, like any other man accused of flagrant immorality — or rather, like any other man except Mr. Harris. 'I'll admit,' he said, 'that I'm no plaster saint. But what can a man do if he's so handsome and witty the women won't let him alone?'

'If it's yourself you mean,' broke in Mr. Fergueson with a loud laugh, 'you might cure yourself by taking a good look in a mirror. Shall I run and get you one?'

'You fellows will have your fun,' interpellated Mr. Harris. 'I don't suppose I ought to mind. But I really do want you to understand that I've appreciated your coöperation and I hope we'll all be able to work together in the future.'

'I move that the word "work" be stricken out of the gentleman's remarks,' Mr. Riley interrupted. 'I'm getting to be a regular Eulalian in that respect. But as American consul you can count on my not putting any obstacles in your way. Unless, of course, some other American corporation pays a bigger bribe.'

'Do you know when you'll be coming back?' asked Mr. Fergueson.

'No,' answered Mr. Harris. 'I'm not at all sure. Maybe I shan't come back — that is, to stay. I'll have general charge of the developments here, of course, but it is possible I shall be able to manage them better from New York. The financial end of it, you know. Still, I don't know. There are some things I like about Santa Eulalia.' Incongruously or not the image of the wicked Antonia came before his eyes as he said this.

'You shouldn't expect to find life here quite as exciting as it has been this past week,' observed Mr. Riley. 'A war, a revolution, an assassination, all in six days. Chicago itself couldn't do better than that.'

'You know, really,' Mr. Fergueson said, 'it's beastly strange, but no one seems to have the slightest curiosity about that assassination. In England, now, the man would have been arrested in ten days and hanged inside a month.'

'Or the woman.' Mr. Riley grinned.

'What makes you think it was a woman?' asked Mr. Harris. 'Some one else made that suggestion to me.'

'Because,' explained Mr. Riley, 'if it had been a man he would by this time be running for Congress on the strength of it. The women are more old-fashioned about such things. But I'll tell you one thing, if they ever did find out who did it, they'd stick up a statue to her right in front of the presidential palace. Republics aren't always ungrateful.'

From where the three men sat they could look across at the cathedral. The doors were open and people were going in.

'What is going on?' asked Mr. Fergueson. 'Anything unusual?'

Mr. Harris gazed pleasantly at the animated scene. 'Not unless you call marriage unusual,' he said. 'Young Gomez is getting married. The daughter of one of the strongest supporters of the late president. It's very fortunate. It will help to bring the two factions together.'

'Gomez seems to have been this fellow Domingo's right-hand man,' remarked Mr. Riley. 'What is he getting out of it? Isn't he going to be vice-president or secretary of the treasury or something?'

Mr. Harris smiled mysteriously. 'I think not. I understand that he isn't interested in politics.'

'What is he, anyway? What does he do?'

'He was a lawyer, I believe, before the revolution. But he needn't be anything unless he wants to. He had quite a large sum of money left him the other day — quite a fortune by Eulalian standards. I think we can count on him to be one of the pillars of the new Santa Eulalia. I may even say that he

has shown a decided interest in our project. Of course that is what we want. We want to make this a joint enterprise, in which the more influential natives will have a part.'

'Is it the same woman —— ?' asked Mr. Riley.

'I believe it is,' Mr. Harris answered. 'There is said to be quite a romance behind it.'

'By God, I'm glad of it!' Mr. Riley emphasized his satisfaction by taking a big drink. 'Love finds a way. What does the poet say? 'Tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round.'

'That is one way of looking at it,' returned Mr. Harris, whose potions had made him slightly more sententious than usual. 'Another way of saying it is that the world wouldn't keep on going round very long if most of us didn't pay our bills on or about the first of every month.'

They continued drinking. Even Mr. Harris took quite a few additional drinks, until he finally lost count and the universe became very rosy and pleasant. Damn it, he thought, why leave this delightful spot to return to the rigors of New York? Why not make it up with Antonia? He could find career enough right here, and leave Wall Street to stew in its own juice. These people of Santa Eulalia were foolishly contented with so little, yet they were none the less contented.

Groups of men came across the plaza singing. Bevies of girls, hands on hips, eyed them boldly and exchanged with them certain broad pleasantries, at which every one laughed uproariously. Babies ran

about barefooted, with indigestible tidbits, such as tortillas and enchiladas, held in their fearfully dirty little hands. The stiff fronds of the palm trees moved in stately fashion in the afternoon breeze from the sea. Some one was playing on some sort of stringed instrument somewhere — or perhaps everywhere. The coming coolness of evening blessed the heated brow.

Except for one or two windows of the presidential palace which were still boarded up pending the arrival of the leisurely glaziers, there was no sign, no material scar of the storm of passion and violence which had swept the city. The dead and wounded were out of sight, and no one seemed to be thinking about them. Santa Eulalia, in its childlike delight in the incumbent moment, did not regret its yesterdays nor dread its to-morrows. It went on, under the sun and under the stars, dancing to an inaudible music of which its violins, its guitars, its singing voices, were but fragmentary echoes, and of which its dirt and poverty were not a complete contradiction.

The cathedral bells began to ring, not with the sullen boom of Nordic church bells, but with a gay, almost tinkly note. The crowd was pressing around the doors now. Carriages and a few automobiles were arriving.

'There she goes,' said Mr. Fergueson.

They all stood up to look. Even at that distance the white-veiled figure suggested its lithe beauty.

Mr. Riley raised his glass. 'Well, here's to her! I

wish I had her myself. If I had, I'd be a better boy.'

They all drank. As Mr. Riley was putting his glass down, his gaze wandered toward the stream of passers-by. He found himself, as it were by chance, looking directly into the wicked eyes of a maddeningly pretty girl of nineteen or twenty. She halted and returned his gaze with a mocking challenge. According to Mr. Riley's lights, this left him but one thing to do. He quietly rose.

'You gentlemen will have to excuse me,' he announced. 'I have an engagement that I just remembered and I'm overdue. The best of luck to you, Harris, if I don't see you again before you go. I'll see you sometime, anyhow.'

'Of course!' declared Mr. Harris heartily. 'Of course we'll meet again.'

He had not yet perceived the cause of Mr. Riley's sudden departure. But now, as he inspected her, an irrepressible chagrin manifested itself on his flushed countenance. Antonia had taken Mr. Riley's arm. Mr. Riley looked around with a grin that made Mr. Harris wish him a thousand miles deep in hell.

'Did I understand you to say,' asked Mr. Fergueson, picking up a dropped thread of the conversation, 'that you were coming back?'

Mr. Harris shook his head slowly and sorrowfully. 'No,' he replied. 'No, I don't think I ever shall.'

THE END